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**FRIENDS
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THE MAID MARVELLOUS
JEANNE DARC

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

THE FAIRY LATCHKEY

THE TWINS OF TUMBLEDOWNDREARY



"BEFORE HER JUDGES"



ILLUSTRATED BY STEPHEN REID RBA.

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DEDICATED TO

V. A. M. T.

"A faithful friend is the medicine of life."

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THE MAID MARVELLOUS JEANNE DARC

PART I DOMREMY

“ Look on thy country, look on fertile France,
And see the cities and the towns defac'd
By wasting ruin of a cruel foe !
As looks the mother on her lowly babe,
When death doth close his tender dying eyes,
See, see, the pining malady of France.”

“ HENRY VI.”

LONG ago, five centuries and more, there was a man by name Jacques Darc, and his wife's name was Isabelle Romée ; they had three children, Jacques, Pierre, and Catherine, and lived together in Domremy among the hills of the Vosges. Jacques Darc himself, a Champagnard, sprang of a stock which came from the village of Arc in the Duchy of Bar, but Domremy lay in the Duchy of Lorraine, hard by the high roads to Paris and

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to Aachen, so that it had France upon the one side and the Empire on the other, the border being an oak wood known as the Bois Chesnu. (Note 1, p. 23.) Men told how in this forest Charlemagne had gone a-hunting, and knighted the thousand-year old stag, which wore a golden collar round its neck.

Now, in the year of the Incarnation of our Lord 1412, there was born a second daughter to Jacques and Isabelle Darc, and the birth fell at Epiphany-tide, the festival of the Three Kings. Truly those three Wise Men have been accounted gift-bringers since the day they offered gold and spices to the Christ-child, yet never had they brought so rare a gift to any dwelling as when they crossed the threshold of Jacques Darc. In later times there went a talk how on the birth-night of the Maid of Orleans the red cock crew and flapped its wings for joy, and the villagers rose up and danced, not knowing wherefore. (Note 2, p. 24.) But

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these are idle tales ; God works in silence and does his alms-deeds secretly, as he has bidden us do ours.

Seven sponsors had the child at her christening, while in big swelling words the priest bade the devils come out of her, and the exorcisms were longer for a girl than for a boy, the Church mistrusting women. Thus they baptized her, and chose the name of Jehanne, after the loved apostle John and the seer of visions, yet in Lorraine she was always called Jeannette, Jeannette Darc, and sometimes Jeannette Romée, that being the fashion of the countryside.

A straggling street by a winding water—such was Domremy ; a cabin clumsily roofed with stones—such was the house which Jeannette had for a home, a poor place enough, though men reckoned Jacques Darc a prosperous farmer, as prosperity went in those hard times. The mothering village church stood nearest neighbour, and between lay a patch of garden, that held all manner

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of serviceable herbs and a few gnarled orchard trees.

Now on the edge of the forest, half a league from Domremy, grew a mighty beech-tree, the beech of Bourlemont; a bent witch-hazel crouched at the foot, while among a copse of wild currant bushes there welled a fairy fountain, gurgling and gulping in the clutches of the thicket. The villagers called it *La Fontaine aux Bonnes Fées*, and the tree they called now by this name and now by that, *l'Arbre Fée de Bourlemont*, the Ladies' Tree, or the Fair May, for in spring-tide, they were used to say, it looked "as fair as lily flower, the branches all drooping to the ground." (Note 3. p. 24.)

Hither had come Pierre de Bourlemont, Lord of the Manor, and his wife the Lady Beatrice, to lead the rustic revels; hither, so the story ran, came the Lord Pierre secretly to tryst at twilight with his fairy love, a wan elf maiden in kirtle and cloak leaf-green, a crown of goblin gold upon her head, such

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as the Gentle People commonly wear. But he died the last of his line, did Pierre de Bourlemont, so that the curé grew afraid, and read mass yearly at the haunted tree. Doubtless many a belated wayfarer heard eerie breezes harping in the boughs, and caught odd glimpses now and again of shimmering coronals and wafting greeneries. Yet if ever he ventured to take hold, only the night wind slipped through his fingers.

So stood the wizard beech of Bourlemont, budding beneath a thousand moons of May, and struck deep roots into the forest mould, and deeper roots into the minds of men, until the fairy peoples were forgotten. We have named them by fanciful and varying names the wide world over : " Themselves " and " Those Without," or the " Kind Folk " and the " Gentry," making shift to flatter them ; in like manner the villagers of Domremy, they knew not what to think, and some called them the Fatal Ladies, and some Les Bonnes Dames Notre Seigneur ;

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others said they were the wraiths of lorn damsels who had lost their true loves many a long year gone, others again that they served a druid altar, priestesses of old grey heathen times.

Nevertheless the goodwives bade them to all christenings, and set ready for them the christening meal in a room beside the mother's. The children of the village came often to the tree, to dance and sing their roundelays, or lie among the flowering currant bushes, feasting on crescent loaves and eggs and nuts, while the fountain lisped in elfish undertones near by.

Jeannette Darc, she too was of the number, a little maid with a low voice and lips rose-red as June, and in the laughing circle of her playmates she would fashion gay posies and garlands, and hang them upon the tree. It shaded her at her pastimes, it shaded her at her prayers, and indeed it yielded the wood at her burning, the poor innocent tree that ever wished her well ; for by and by

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when the black monks accused her of sorcery, they laid to her charge how she had trafficked with the fairies. Yet Jeannette, truth to say, put no faith in spook or pixie, though one of her godmothers made sure of having seen them, and told her many an old wife's tale of the magical mandrake in its lurking-place under the bent witch-hazel.

From her mother she learnt the Lord's Prayer, Creed, and Hail Mary, and to be very deft with distaff and needle. She was pitiful to the poor, and if a tired traveller knocked at the door, would bid him take shelter from the wrangle of wind and rain, and give him a nook by the hearth, where he might sit at his ease and listen to the logs, as they cracked first one crisp jest and then another. Also she would share her supper with him, and make him sleep warm in her own bed, though she must needs lie stretched upon the floor. And to dumb creatures, the feathered and the furred, she was compassionate likewise.

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Tradition whispers how on Easter Eve the bells in every belfry of wide Christendom are loosed and fly to Rome, and the good children may fly with them. Surely little Jeannette should have gone too, riding on the back of a great bronze bell to see the catacombs, and Nero's Circus where the martyrs died ; for she hearkened eagerly to legends of the saints, and tales of the wonderful city.

The chime of the church bell gladdened her, and on a day when the sacristan was laggard in ringing, she promised him some of the wool of her lambs, if only he would be more diligent. Often as she pastured her flock in the meadows, and watched the track of the fleecy clouds that have the wind to their sheep-dog, she knelt awhile and talked with God ; often she gathered wayside flowers and carried them to the shrine of our Lady of Vermont, which topped a neighbouring hill, and here she lingered, praying and pondering alone, until the afternoon waned

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yellow across the uplands. But of her taking the veil, and the vows that are called religious, was never mention made ; she had too sharp a pity for the world to seek to leave it. There were some who twitted her because she would use no oaths, saying merely " Without fail " ; yet if any fell sick among them they ceased mocking, and cried each to other, " Let us send for Jeannette Darc, since she is a skilful nurse and has more wit than most."

Jeannette, Hauviette, Mengette—of a delicate rare morning, still hoary with thick dews, one might have seen them wander threesome in the fields, running fleet races together, or plucking meadowsweet and kingcups by the banks of the willow-wetting Meuse. At work and at play Hauviette was the Maid's close comrade, on which account there are those that envy her, though she raised no stir in the world, and wedded a poor labourer, Gerard of Syonne, near Neuf-chateau. As to Mengette, the Maid loved

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her like a little sister, for her own sister Catherine died young. She had yet another friend, Isabellette Gerardin, who was a married wife already, and Jeannette stood sponsor to her baby son.

Upon a reedy islet in mid-stream, veiled by tall poplars and the river mist, mouldered the castle of the Sieurs de Bourlemont, which fell to ruin after the death of the Lord Pierre, and here the villagers drove their herds for safety, when the wars waxed fierce to the north and west of Domremy. The plumed grass nodded in the tilting-yard, the ivy leaves fluttered like green butterflies about the broken casements, and where once the ladies of Bourlemont stitched tapestries of gold and silver thread, Jeannette the shepherdess grazed her father's cattle. They are all gone now ; the knight that went a-wooing into Faerie, the little vision-haunted peasant girl, and the castle by the waterside which did outlast them both.

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Those were grievous times, and the tale is not good telling. For fear of famine the cities closed their gates, the hungry and the homeless turned to brigands in the woods, and the forest depths became a dead men's ground, while on the tower of Domremy church a sentinel kept vigil night and day. The land was lean and haggard with war, her dry breasts yielding not milk but blood only ; the English invaders had lorded it in France nigh on a hundred years, and the great French nobles were at feud among themselves, so that the realm knew never any rest from the mad sword-play of the Burgundians and the Orleanists. In the meanest of hamlets the factions fought each other ; Domremy was for Orleans, and Maxey for Burgundy, and village boys waged mimic battles if they met upon the roads. But a morning broke when the Burgundians raided Domremy in deathly earnest, and the people fled to Neufchateau seeking shelter. Thus Jeannette saw with her own

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eyes the work of fire and steel, and having seen, remembered.

It happened that Marie of Avignon the visionary had come one day to the French king's court, where Charles VI sat moody on his throne, and told him of her revelations ; she dreamt, she said, of men-at-arms and weapons, yet these were not for her, but for a blessed maid unborn. Also among the common people a saying went abroad, how France should be desolated by a woman and restored by a maid, according to the prophecy of Merlin the magician, what time he wove his manifold enchantments beneath the murmurous oaks of Broceliande.

Now the woman that desolated France was none other than Isabeau of Bavaria, the evil wife of the sixth Charles, the evil mother of his heir the Dauphin. The king, you must know, was pitiably mad, therefore Queen Isabeau did as she listed, revelling amongst her favourites while her husband pined in a sick frenzy, and at the Palais de

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Saint Paul the royal children went in rags like beggars. Further, she and the false Dukes of Burgundy made common cause with the foreign islanders. By the dastard treaty of Troyes she gave her daughter, Katharine the Fair, to Harry V of England for his bride, and sold the French crown to his heirs, despoiling her own son. A boy was born of the marriage, the weakling cub of the lion of Agincourt, and to that infant cradled at Windsor, and crowned with his mother's bracelet, it is said, did traitrous Frenchmen yield the Valois birthright. His proved a lamentable legacy, God knows, since the victories of Jeanne Darc lost him the kingdom, and all he lived to inherit was the curse of madness in his mother's blood.

As for the breach between Orleans and Burgundy, it lasted two generations, like the thorny strife of the White and the Red Rose, and this was the way of it. John the Fearless, Duke of Burgundy, had murdered Louis, Duke of Orleans; and Louis' kinsman,

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the Comte d'Armagnac, espoused the quarrel, which is why the Orleanist party went by the name of Armagnacs thenceforward. The Burgundians, and the north country along with them, swore fealty to Henry VI, the little King of England, but the Armagnacs, and the south, save for Gascony, acknowledged Charles VI and his son after him. (Note 4, p. 24.)

While the Dauphin was still a boy they smuggled him out of Paris, one hag-ridden night when the streets ran red with massacre, and since that day he lurked, a puppet prince, beyond the severing Loire. From castle to castle he journeyed through years of fugitive unrest, and though the mad monarch slept among his forbears, there was many a man of the Armagnacs to whom Charles VII remained the "Dauphin" still; he might be king by right, yet king he would never be in deed, until he was crowned and anointed in the cathedral church of Rheims. But Rheims lay north of the Loire.

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Meanwhile the sleepless vengeance of the Orleanists bided its time, and at length an hour of reckoning came ; John the Fearless was stabbed to his death on Montereau bridge, and Philip of Burgundy, the son of John, took up the blood feud. Truly the days were evil, days of which the prophet might well have said that a deliverer was looked for " more than gold, even a man than the precious wedge of Ophir." But no man offered himself—only a young girl, used to minding sheep in the lush water meadows of the upper Meuse.

Jeannette was twelve years old when first she heard her Voices. She stood at midday in the trim herb garden among the moss-grown apple trees, and suddenly upon her right, towards the gloaming sanctuary of the church, where tricky shadows sported on the graves, there shone a brightness brighter than the sun, and a voice spoke with her, bidding her go into France.

Time and again the Voices called Jeannette,

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twice or thrice weekly. Moreover, the archangel of God, Michael the dragon-slayer, appeared to her in vision, with cohorts of angels round about him. He told her of the heavenly pity for the fair realm of France, and how she must have the Dauphin anointed and crowned at Rheims ; he bade her be a good child, loving the Lord's service, and following always the counsel of the blessed Catherine and the blessed Margaret, whom he would send to guide her.

Saint Catherine, so the curé taught, was patron of French prisoners ; the village church at Maxey stood to her praise, and her name remained dear to Jeannette for the sake of the little sister dead and gone ; but Saint Margaret, folks said, was a young shepherdess, patron of those who labour in the fields. As to Saint Michael, everybody knows that he is the angel of the Judgment, and will weigh the souls of all men in his scales. Greatly honoured was he in Bar and in Lorraine, the champion of the French,



"TIME AND AGAIN THE VOICES CALLED JEANNETTE"

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while one Saint George, reported to have slain a dragon likewise, fought on the part of the English.

Yet of the visions Jeannette said no word to any. Who has not seen another maid, in old dark altar-pieces, by an embroidery frame or liliated well, giving ear to the message of her angel? But of the strange lone glories which befell her she spoke to none, pondering them in her heart. Those were discreet and silent souls, Mary of Galilee and Jeannette of Lorraine. Yet her very silence was afterwards turned to her reproach, since she grievously erred, declared her judges, in that she did not reveal the apparitions to a priest.

Now two years before she went from Domremy her father had a dream, and throughout his dream he saw her in man's dress and leading men-at-arms. On this he was angry, and told her brothers that should it come to pass they were to drown her, or truly he would do it himself, sooner than be

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dishonoured by his daughter. Whence we know him for a poor crook-tempered fool, afraid of the wagging of his neighbours' tongues rather than of a whole Burgundian army.

During the May time when Jeannette was sixteen, her Voices began to counsel her more plainly. "Go," said they, "to Robert de Baudricourt, captain of Vaucouleurs, and ask of him an escort of soldiers which shall take you to the Dauphin." She was a modest maid, with no desire to make talk nor mix herself in men's matters, nevertheless she might not disobey. Now it fortunately fared that there lived near by at Little Burey a kindly fellow named Durand Lassois, her mother's kinsman; to him she went, and begged him to accompany her, and on Ascension Thursday in mid-May they took the road towards Vaucouleurs.

It was no hard matter to get an audience with the captain, but when the Maid required an escort that should bring her to

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the Dauphin, he laughed long and boisterously, bidding Lassois take her home and beat her, for she was assuredly mad. Yet Jeannette continued undismayed. "Tell the Dauphin to guard himself," said she, "and not offer battle to his enemies, since the Lord shall send him succour about mid-Lent." And so saying she went her ways again, she and her good kinsman. As to Robert de Baudricourt, he made exceedingly merry with his garrison, and little guessed how but for this same shepherd lass, his name were clean forgotten in the world.

From that day onward Jeannette spoke freely of her mission, which was to save France and restore the blood royal, also of the heavenly spirits who had visited her, and these she called her Counsel, or her Brothers of Paradise. "There is a maid," quoth she, "between Coussy and Vaucouleurs, that will have the Dauphin hallowed to king before a year is out." Yet her comrades only laughed at her; she had

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loitered after dusk, they said, in the uncanny Bois Chesnu, and gotten her mission from the Small People who ride the air on broomsticks.

To the lone marches of Lorraine there came but tardy rumours of the world beyond the Vosges, and never any news that were glad hearing ; at times a pilgrim or a pedlar passed, and from such as these the country folk heard tell how the English had beleaguered the good town of Orleans upon the River Loire. In every tavern and by every fireside ran talk of the siege, and of nothing save the siege, since Orleans was the gateway to the south, and if Orleans were lost the Loire was lost, and all France south of the Loire. But to Jeannette Darc as she folded her flock, or sat by her spinning-wheel, came the voice of the archangel, Michael the great fighter. " Raise the siege," it said, " which is before Orleans." To whom she replied, " Messire, I am a simple, untaught girl ; how can these things be ? "

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And the angel answered, "Va, va, fille de Dé, je serai à ton aide." (Note 5, p. 24.)

So then it was agreed between the Maid and Durand Lassois that he should fetch her away to Little Burey, from whence she might go once more to Vaucouleurs. His wife, as it chanced, had fallen sick, and lay in need of nursing, and though Jeannette was loath to gain her end by stealth, yet she must needs depart upon some pretext, or Jacques Darc would thwart her at the outset. "But I know," said she, and what she said came true, "that afterwards he will give me his blessing, and that my brothers will join me." Moreover time pressed, for the siege had endured three months already.

It was the 6th of January, Jeannette's birthday, and she was seventeen. A wintry dawn rose livid in the east as she and Lassois started on their way, surely the strangest faring forth in story, a thing unreal, fantastic, like that adventurous flitting of the nursery rhyme :

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“ How many miles to Babylon ?
Three score and ten.
Can I get there by candle-light ?
Yes, and back again.”

Yet though Jeanne Darc set out by candle-light, she never came back again.

Little Mengette was early astir, for the Maid had warned her of her going, and years hence, when she was little Mengette no longer, but the wife of Jean Joyart and a woman grown, she would still call to mind that parting, and her playmate's stifled cry, “ Farewell, and may God bless you ! ” Yet all this time Hauviette was sleeping soundly. The Maid could meet the stare of lounging courtiers, and the volley of cannon and cross-bow, and a day broke when she set eyes upon the rack unmoved, but just one thing not even she could face, and that was the leave-taking from her girlhood's friend.

Now a certain labourer had his cottage on the outskirts of the village, and in the great world's history he is notable for this alone—he was the last in Domremy who

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heard the Maid pass by. The birds were cheeping drowsily, the treetops dripped and shivered in the bleak wind of dawning, and from Maxey and from Greux the church bells tinkled for the high festival of Christ's Epiphany, when there came a sound of steps along the road, and a voice that called, "Adieu! I go to Vaucouleurs."

Turn then, Jeannette, and take your parting look. I know that you will draw battalions after you as the moon draws the tides, that you will stand in bright apparel at the right hand of princes, and in a pleasant land where thorns are not, the martyrs and the saints shall make you welcome. All these things shall be yours, but the loved roofs of Domremy never any more.

NOTES TO PART I

Note 1, p. 2.—Thus, farther south, the fishers of Avignon still use the words "Empire" and "Royaume" to distinguish the banks of the Rhone. The Dukes of Lorraine, nominally vassals of the French kings, were really independent, and very troublesome to their over-lords in time

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of peace, though loyal enough at need, as in the battles of Crécy and Agincourt. Lorraine did not form part of France until 1738.

Note 2, p. 2.—From a letter by Messire Percival Boulainvilliers to the Duke of Milan.

Note 3, p. 4.—See evidence of Domremy witnesses at the Trial of Rehabilitation, 1456.

Note 4, p. 14.—The Kings of England were hereditary Dukes of Gascony.

Note 5, p. 21.—Dé—old French for Dieu.

PART II

ORLEANS

“ Hear, O ye kings ; give ear, O ye princes ; I, even I, will sing unto the Lord ; I will sing praise to the Lord God of Israel. . . . The inhabitants of the villages ceased, they ceased in Israel, until that I Deborah arose, that I arose a mother in Israel. . . . They that are delivered from the noise of archers in the places of drawing water, there shall they rehearse the righteous acts of the Lord, even the righteous acts towards the inhabitants of his villages in Israel ; then shall the people of the Lord go down to the gates. Awake, awake, Deborah : awake, awake, utter a song : arise, Barak, and lead thy captivity captive, thou son of Abinoam. Then he made him that remaineth to have dominion over the nobles among the people : the Lord made me have dominion over the mighty.”

JUDGES V.

Now from Twelfth Night to Shrove-tide the Maid tarried at Little Burey, nursing Lassois' wife, and when she and her kinsman reached Vaucouleurs, it was turned February already. He lodged her in the house of one Leroyer, a wheelwright, and the same day

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she parleyed with the captain: "And I will come to you," said she, "until you give me the men-at-arms, for so my Lord has bidden me, and I cannot disobey."

On this Robert de Baudricourt was troubled in mind, and immediately he sent a priest to exorcise her, the better to know whether she were inspired of God, or a sorceress leagued with the devil. But the foolish mummary was unavailing, and offended her to no purpose.

Often one might have seen her in her worn red dress, praying in the crypt of Saint Mary's church on the hill above the town, and truly she had need to pray for patience while the halting days limped by. "The time weighs heavy on me," she would say, "as upon a woman drawing near her delivery, and I long to be gone." But in the mean season she busied herself about the house, and all spoke well of her: "I could wish," quoth one, "that I had a daughter good as she."

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The rumour of the holy Maid of Vaucouleurs spread rapidly to Nancy, chief city of Lorraine, where the Duke of Lorraine was lying very sick, and he sent for Jeannette to cure him. She came indeed, and bade him mend his life and promised him her prayers, but working his cure she said was beyond her power, as she did not profess to do miracles. And the old rake gave her a present of a fine horse, bearing her no grudge for her plain speaking.

Now Chinon, where the Dauphin was holding his court, lay distant from Vaucouleurs a hundred and fifty leagues, yet when Maitre Leroyer warned her of the perils of the road, she answered him serenely: "I fear them not, for I have God with me, who will prepare my way to the Lord Dauphin. Hereunto was I born."

Towards the middle of the month Jeannette went again to the captain. "In God's name, Robert de Baudricourt," she cried, "you are too slow, and have wrought great injury

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thereby. This day the Dauphin's cause has lost a battle, and it will suffer further hurt unless you bring me to him speedily." And herein she told him the simple truth, but whether or not she had the second sight, let fools judge, since it is more than the wisest can say. (Note 6, p. 59.)

The captain was much perplexed, and sent to inquire into the matter, and presently, sure enough, tidings reached him of the distant fight at Rouvray, called the battle of the Herrings. The besiegers of Orleans must needs have fish for Lent, and a supply of herrings was already on the road when a French force stopped the convoy, and an encounter followed at Rouvray in which the English got the best of it. Nor was this anything new, since the French had gained no victories in the memory of living man ; at the sound of the English " Hurrah " they would run like hares, and nurses scared their nurslings with the names of Falstaff and De la Pole and Talbot.

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Now when Robert de Baudricourt found that Jeannette had spoken truly, he went straight to the house of the wheelwright, and promised her the escort she required; moreover he laid his own broadsword between her hands, giving her Godspeed in these words, "*Allez, et vienne que pourra.*" And the Maid set out for Chinon the same night.

Her following was but twenty-five in number, soldiers and rustics (among them her brothers, Jacques and Pierre), with the Chevalier Jean de Metz, and Bertrand de Poulangy his esquire. These at the first would scarce be seated in her presence, though she was a farmer's daughter and they well-born, yet Jeannette allowed no ceremony, and they soon became fast friends. As for herself and young Bertrand, they were boy and girl together and made very merry. The company journeyed at night by reason of the Burgundians, and during the day-time her two comrades lay fully armed beside her, and guarded her when she slept. "Always

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she seemed as good," quoth Bertrand, "as if she had been a saint." Nor was there talk of love between them, for she resolved to bide unwed the while her mission lasted, not in a spirit of asceticism or vain merit-mongering, but rather in the wisdom of the Scripture: "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life." Her judges questioned her often on the matter, to whom she said plainly she was vowed a maiden only so long as it should please God, nor was she fearful of losing her peace of mind or the comfort of her Counsel, were she to marry when her work was done. How far, how very far, Jeanne Darc, did you outstrip your times!

After eleven days the Maid reached Chinon; her eyes took in the curve of stranger hills, her ears the unwonted sound of a new name, for, "In my own country they called me Jeannette, but since I came into France I am called Jeanne." So she herself bears witness, and it is a homesick witness surely.



“ALLEZ, ET VIENNE QUE POURRA”

ORLEANS

“Saviour of the realm,” “Page of Christ,” “Victory’s sweetheart”—such were the titles men gave her, and the old familiar name was crowded out.

She immediately sought audience of the Dauphin, having sent word from Fierbois of her approach. Yet Charles declined to see her; he was very well amused with his greyhounds and his troubadours, and his two worthless favourites, the *Sieur de la Tremouille* and the Archbishop of Rheims, and hated to be pestered by affairs of State. Already he had received ambassadors from Orleans, which was bad enough, seeing they told him roundly how it stood not with his honour to leave his faithful city to her fate. This was unreasonable talk as well as uncivil, since what could a man do who had nothing in his treasury save forty francs, and no standing army save his own bodyguard, and that unpaid?

Yet luckily for many a quailing heart through the length and breadth of the

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Orléanais, the Dauphin was better matched than he deserved, with Marie of Anjou, whereby he had gained not merely a winsome wife, but a mighty shrewd woman to his mother-in-law, Yolande Queen of Sicily and Duchess of Touraine. This high lady took matters in hand, since to her thinking drowning men must catch at straws, and Messire the Dauphin knew not an hour's peace until he promised to give the Maid a hearing.

So de Metz and de Poulangy brought her one day into the banqueting hall, to as strange a gathering as ever a March sun lightened or March winds noised abroad. There was the whole court assembled, fops and coxcombs mostly—Mylords spiritual that had forgotten how to pray, Mylords temporal that had forgotten how to fight, and ladies that had forgotten other things; while over against them stood a simple maid, in tunic and hose of grey homespun, her dark hair *taillé en rond*. The Dauphin lounged at ease among his retinue, bearing neither coronet nor

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sceptre, nor any token which might blab of sovereignty, yet if he hereby sought to trick her, his poor jest came to nothing, since she wavered never a whit, but singled him out on the instant.

“The Lord give you long life, gentle Dauphin,” quoth she, and went and knelt before him; “I am come at God’s command to bring you to your good city of Rheims for your crowning and sacring, that you may be vassal of the King of Heaven who is King of France. I pray you grant me men-at-arms, and hasten my appointed work; so will I raise the siege of Orleans, and break the English power.”

Charles greeted her kind and courtly, and led her to a window in an alcove, and there they stood a while and talked apart. Then he asked of her a sign in proof of her mission, and got a surer proof than ever he reckoned on. For the sins of Queen Isabeau his mother weighed heavy upon him from a boy, as well they might, insomuch that he ques-

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tioned the lawfulness of his birth and his right to the crown of his ancestors. But these misgivings he had shared with none, only in the shut places of his heart had he prayed God to make his doubts an end. And now Jeanne told him of his doubt and of his prayer, and bade him take comfort, since he was indeed of the blood royal, a Valois king-begotten. The on-lookers bore witness that the Dauphin seemed moved out of measure, and some guessed one thing and some another, and there was gossip and to spare touching "the king's secret," and the sign which the Maid had given him ; but the answer to the riddle is as I have said, and all men came to know it by and by.

To-day the castle of Chinon for the most part lies a ruin, yet in the banqueting hall one may still trace, far up and here and there, the deep mullions of the window with the narrow window-seats, and a carved chimney stone cold these many years. None treads now where the Maid once trod, for

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only the winds can find a footing upon that airy floor, to dance their boisterous reels in the void spaces, while the sun holds a torch to their revelry, or the sleep-walking moon gropes her way along the battlements.

Jeanne and her people were honourably lodged in the fort of Coudray, and a company of priests was sent into Lorraine to glean a true report of her. Nothing but good did they hear tell, in Domremy and Greux and Coussy, in Vaucouleurs and Neufchateau, everywhere the same story. She was all meek and maidenly, was Jeannette Darc, yet merrier than a merle at times, and not without her share of woman's wit; loyal moreover to the Armagnacs, and would cleave to the crown, as the saying goes, though it hung upon a bush.

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In the meanwhile they of the Dauphin's council visited her constantly, and set themselves to discover whether she were a saint or an enchantress. Her still ways baffled them: "She is a gentle little shepherdess,"

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quoth one, "candid, but not given to much talking." "I see nothing in her," quoth another, "that is not Catholic and reasonable." Which was high praise truly, for there are many things reasonable without being Catholic, and many things Catholic without being reasonable, and to find these two together is like finding a choice orange-tree, bearing flowers and fruits at once.

On a day when she was riding into Chinon, a man met her by the roadside and cast foul words at her, and the Maid turning in her saddle looked him sorrowfully between the eyes. "Do you swear?" said she, "and you so near your death!" And he died within the hour, for he chanced to fall into a moat and was drowned.

If any doubted her mission she would seek out the little chapel of Saint Martin (where now the monthly roses redden at will), to hush herself by prayer and wait upon her Counsel, and the consolation it gave her she would most gladly have shared, had it

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been possible. "I wish," she said, "that all might hear the Voices, even as I."

In such wise, generations later, did John Bunyan desire to share his joy with the very crows in the ploughlands. Yet there were other times when the sun seemed to grudge him its light, and the tiles of the roofs and the flagstones of the street seemed leagued together against him, for Bunyan the tinker was a man of moods, whose spirits rose and fell like a playing fountain, while the mind of the Maid was balanced fair and strong, as God balances his stars in the mid-heaven.

It happened that near Chinon lived a royal prince, the Duke of Alençon, but lately home from England, where for three years he had been held a prisoner. He was hunting quails in the Saint Florent marshes when rumour stayed him, and babbled of the virgin of the Bois Chesnu, and although loath to quit his sport, he was minded to clap eyes upon this nine days' wonder. Therefore,

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as destiny would have it, he left off from hunting quails and rode to Chinon, and Jeanne bade him heartily welcome. "The more of the blood royal are joined to this cause," she cried, "the better for the cause and the blood royal." Alençon was young and debonair, and she christened him her "pretty Duke," while he on his part so much admired her lance-practice and horsemanship in the fields by Chinon castle, beside the jocund waters of the Vienne, that he gave her a war charger, which pleased her mightily, since she loved good horses, even as she loved gay stuffs and woman's finery. We would rather, would we not, have the foibles of Jeanne Darc than the virtues of some godly people we could name? Kings' chaff is better than other folks' corn.

By this time the priests had returned from their mission, bearing a good report, but still the Dauphin wavered. So to set his mind at rest, the council and the bishops hit upon a plan. The Maid should be examined

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before the university of Poitiers, and those learned professors should decide what manner of spirit she was of. Impatient to be doing, the very ground seeming molten under her feet, she must nevertheless resign herself and go to Poitiers.

Now this was the foremost city of Poitou, and not merely the seat of a university, but of the Parliament also, since the day that Paris fell to the Burgundians; and one Rabateau, advocate to the Parliament, journeyed thither from time to time, and lodged in a tavern which had the sign of a rose above its doorway. The Maid was placed in his keeping, and the doctors of the university, lawyers and canonists, and what not, came to the house and questioned her daily. (Note 7, p. 60.)

They asked her, the sorry fools, if she believed in God, she whose whole mind was set on God as the sunflower yearns to the sun. They catechised her touching dusty doctrines with the cobwebs of a thousand years upon

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them, for her claim must needs be tested by all the Fathers of the Church. "Yet our Lord has other books," said Jeanne, "than those you prate of. I do not know A from B, but this I know, I come by the word of God to deliver Orleans from the English, and have the Dauphin blessed to king at Rheims. Am I in Poitiers to work signs and miracles? Give me soldiers, few or many, and let me go." Then they began to reason of the matter: "If," said they, "God purposes to deliver France, he can deliver it without your aid." Whereupon her patience snapped, so that one might all but hear it snapping. "He helps who help themselves," she cried; "the men-at-arms shall fight the battles, and God will give the victory." Another day they asked her of her Voices: "Did the angels speak good French?" inquired Séguin, professor of theology. "Better than yours," she retorted, and raised a laugh, for he, worthy man, talked with a Limousin accent that set the teeth on edge.

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Truly, never mortal maid has been so much plagued by questions as Jeanne Darc. It was the doctors of the Church who questioned her then, it is the doctors of medicine who question her now. "Jeanne," said they of old time when she stood before them in the house of Rabateau, "tell us, are you come from Satan or from God?" "Jeanne," say they of this generation, the medical men and the critics, peering at her through the twilit centuries, "tell us, did you experience unilateral hallucinations?"

It was plain to see that the Maid led a devout and sober life. Weekly she received the blessed Sacrament, daily when possible she heard mass, also prime and vespers, and confessed herself monthly with great seriousness and simplicity. "One cannot," she was wont to say, "cleanse one's conscience too often." Yet in truth her sins were no worse to look at than poppies that mar the standing corn. Therefore after much hair-splitting and spinning of casuistry, the uni-

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versity gave sentence in her favour : Jeanne Darc, they pronounced, was a good Christian and a good Catholic, and the king should accept the aid she offered, since to repel it were to offend the Spirit, and render himself unworthy of the help of God. (Note 8, p. 60.)

Upon which this notable assemblage of wiseacres dispersed, and no great harm done. But Jeanne and her company got to the saddle, and two generations later there still remained old folks in Poitiers that would point out the Maid's mounting-stone, hard by the church of Saint Stephen, where she took horse for Tours. (Note 9, p. 60.)

The Dauphin immediately proclaimed her leader of the royal forces, with the Duke of Alençon as her lieutenant-in-chief. Further, he gave her a household befitting her new station, among them Pasquerel the Augustinian her confessor, D'Aulon her equerry, Raimond and Louis de Conte her pages. Charles, it is true, had no standing army, but Orleanist raiders in plenty began

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to offer as recruits. "They will hear the drums," so Jeanne had said at Domremy when the greybeards told her how Frenchmen were turned craven every one; "they will hear the drums; they will answer." And the numbers swelled from day to day. The gentry sold their lands to buy a captaincy, or if they had not lands to sell, enlisted as archers and thought it no shame. In Blois the Maid set up her camp, on the river flats beside the snake-green Loire, and had a wild enough rabble for her army, the generals little better than the troops, swashbucklers all—the Marshal de Boussac, the Marshal de Rais, Poton de Saintrailles, and La Hire; Satan La Hire his men were used to call him, by reason of his frequent fearsome oaths.

Yet before three days were out she had that camp in applepie order; no pillaging, no drink, no dice, the troops confessing themselves and going to mass as to the manner born. Even La Hire, the ruffianly and terrible, forewent his oaths, promising

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to swear only by his baton, and to pray with the best of them. "Messire God, do unto me as I would do unto you, were I God and you La Hire"; so ran his first prayer, it is said, and the mirth of the Maid was good hearing.

Her white armour was fashioned by a master craftsman in Tours, and the burghers gave her a scabbard all of cloth of gold, while for her sword she sent to Fierbois, since her Voices told her of an ancient sword engraven with five crosses, lying buried out of sight and out of mind behind the altar in Saint Catherine's church, the which, they said, should serve her in battle. The priests had never heard tell of it, but digged behind the altar none the less, and brought it to her marvelling. (Note 10, p. 60.)

Furthermore, she caused two standards to be broidered, the larger for her standard-bearer, the lesser for herself. The first was of white linen, silken-fringed, whereon were the lilies of France and figures of Jesus and

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Mary, with angels adoring, and the words "Jesu Maria"; while the second bore a dove on a blue ground, and its motto ran, "De part le roi du ciel." In the chapel of Saint Saviour they were hallowed, upon the steeps of Blois. (Note 11, p. 60.)

Now the Maid sent word to the English before Orleans, bidding them quit the siege and surrender their strongholds to the Dauphin, but they merely laughed at her challenge; accordingly she struck her tents and the march began. With her personal staff about her she rode at the head of her troops, "a thing wholly divine," quoth one, "both to see and to hear," and after her followed a band of priests chanting the "Veni Creator": for this much is very certain; if you want a man to fight his best and die his bravest, you must give him in some sort that passionate battlecry of warring tribes, "Arise, O God, maintain thine own cause."

On Friday the 29th of April, the Maid first sighted Orleans, whereof the name

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shall be married with her own so long as there is speech in the round world. Yonder it lay in the bend of the river, and wished it had never been built. The city was encircled by a dozen forts, some upon the north bank and some upon the south, and the English for the most part were encamped to the northward. Jeanne intended to approach from the north and attack the enemy out of hand, but her generals, grown grey in reverses and disaster, had lost all liking for pitched battles, and preferred to besiege the besiegers at their leisure. Therefore they tricked her, which was no hard matter, seeing she had not any knowledge of the roads, and brought her to the southern bank, her and her whole army; and the Governor of Orleans was privy to the plot. Now when she perceived it her heart grew hot within her, since she had provisions in plenty to victual the starving town, and how were these to enter? The English, very like, would suffer them to pass, for the siege by

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this time was turned to a blockade, as negligent as you please, the enemy remaining in his trenches and making no sallies ; but the river flowed between, and the wind blew contrary.

While Jeanne debated what to do, came Dunois the Governor with knights and citizens to bid her welcome, and their coming was through the Burgundy Gate, the only gate the enemy had not seized. "Are you the Bastard of Orleans?" she asked, since he was son to Duke Louis, and that was the name he went by, from one end of France to the other.

"I am he," said Dunois, "and right glad to see you."

"My Lord's counsel," she cried, "is wiser than yours. I bring you the best help ever knight or city had, and you sought to deceive me, but you have deceived yourselves, and except God mend your folly and change the wind, there is no remedy."

And while she was yet speaking, the wind

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changed. So then the Maid and Dunois put across the river, and two hundred lances with them, and cattle and supplies ; but the boats were insufficient for the shipping of the troops, wherefore these must needs return to Blois, and gain the northerly bank by a bridge farther down the river. Jeanne would remain in the city meantime, and await the coming of her army.

She entered without difficulty under cover of night, and took lodging, she and her brothers and Louis de Conte her page, in the house of Jacques Boucher, treasurer of Orleans. Eager crowds made haste to greet her, thronging the narrow torch-lit streets, poor wretches with scant food in their stomachs and scant hope in their hearts, and one, so it fared, set fire to her standard by mischance, yet she herself did quench it in a hand's turn, for she was skilful in small matters no less than great.

On the morrow she sent word to the besiegers a second time. She could not write,

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being unlettered (Note 12, p. 61), but she dictated, and this is what the English got to read : " King of England, and you, Duke of Bedford, who call yourself Regent of France (Note 13, p. 61), and William de la Pole, Earl of Suffolk, render to the Dauphin the keys of all the towns you took and violated. The Maid is sent hither by God to restore the blood royal, yet she is very ready to make peace if you will do her right, by giving up France and paying for what you have held. And you archers, noble and simple, begone to your own land, or expect news of the Maid who will shortly come to see you to your great hurt. King of England, if you do not so, wherever I find your people, I shall drive them out. Think not to hold the realm from the Lord of Heaven, Son of the blessed Mary ; King Charles shall hold it, for God has revealed the same by means of the Maid."

The Earl of Suffolk thought he would teach this silly Amazon a lesson, so he kept

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her two heralds as hostages, and sent her some good advice ; she had best go home, he said, and mind her cows. On the following Tuesday the French army came from Blois, despite the Dauphin's counsellors, who strove to disband it ; for already Jeanne had her sworn foes at court, La Tremouille and Regnault de Chartres the Archbishop, both of them resolved upon thwarting her enterprise ; sham courtiers these of a sham king, and they disliked the meddling of a low-born girl, her troublesome patriotism and her call to arms.

She welcomed her troops without the walls, and led them to their quarters in the city, and never a shot fired from the enemy's lines. The English were not afraid of her as yet. A century of conquest lay behind them, and they had veteran generals, Talbot and de la Pole ; even now they awaited reinforcements under Sir John Falstaff, and sixty miles to the north of them was Paris with fresh supplies of men and money for the asking.

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since there the Duke of Bedford ruled as Regent in his boy nephew's name. But the tide was at the turn.

Early the following morning Jeanne started out of sleep: "French blood is flowing," she exclaimed, "and I have not been told." Arming herself in haste, she set upon her head the white-plumed velvet cap, a keepsake from the townsfolk of Orleans; then she mounted her horse and rode to the Burgundy Gate. Over against it the English held the fortress of Saint Loup, and a mixed rabble of soldiery and citizens had attacked the garrison, yet their courage proved only a flash in the pan, and now they were getting the worst of it. But the skirmish of Saint Loup was not to end as a thousand other skirmishes had ended, for the Maid of Orleans had taken the field, "clear as the sun, fair as the moon, terrible as an army with banners."

She rallied her men on the instant, though the odds were great against her; the mystic

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sword of Fierbois drank no blood, nor ever did, yet where it gleamed, and where her standard wimpled, the victory was sure. She drove the enemy back into the fort, and Dunois then besought her to let well alone, but the Maid was not so minded. "Bastard! Bastard!" she upbraided him, "will you always play with these English? Sound the charge! I will carry the place by storm." Which she did, and utterly destroyed it, excepting ammunition and supplies. At this fight a number of priests were taken prisoner, but Jeanne gave them their freedom: "For," said she, "theirs is the livery of God." (She came to know it better presently, that livery of the Anglo-Burgundian priesthood, and doubted, maybe, whether God would own it.)

After the storming of Saint Loup the English leaders formed a weighty resolution, which was to weaken their garrisons north of the river and strengthen those upon the southern bank. Saint Loup they could afford to part



"SHE RALLIED HER MEN ON THE INSTANT"

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with if needs must, but not with the Augustins or the Boulevard, nor with the fort of Les Tourelles. As for the English soldiery, the bowmen and the poorer sort, the fear of witchcraft gripped them by the throat. The tide had turned.

Thursday in that week was Ascension Day, and the Maid's generals seized eagerly upon the pretext; there must be no fighting on such a holy feast. Yet this they said, not from any sudden fit of piety, but because they were afraid to risk sorties. Jeanne wished to meet the enemy in the open, her generals wished to revictual the city and leave it to stand a siege, for the old terror of the English still possessed them, and though willing to use the Maid as a mascot, they distrusted her as a military leader. She herself was ready enough to avert bloodshed and to make peace with honour; for she deemed it, she said, a dolorous pity that the gallants of France and England should turn their steel the one against the other, rather than

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fight as brothers-in-arms against the common foe of Christendom, Mahound. Accordingly she addressed the English a third time, fastening her letter to an arrow and shooting it beyond the city walls.

At that there arose an ugly hubbub in the enemy's camp. "News! News!" they clamoured, "from the harlot of the Armagnacs." And the Maid standing upon the battlements wept to hear them, for she was stainless as a white frost, and the vile taunt pierced to the young indignant heart of her.

"You men of England," so ran the letter, "who have no right to this kingdom, the Lord of Heaven commands that you quit your strong places and return to your own country, or I will cause you such an overthrow as shall never be forgotten. I write to you for the third and last time; I will not write again."

The enemy gave neither sign nor answer, and on the morrow Jeanne struck home. It was a fast-day, yet no fast was kept; the

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Maid of Orleans had other fish to fry. By means of a bridge of boats and the islet of Aignan she threw her army across the river, and attacked the fort of the Augustins. First all went prosperously, but presently the garrison from Fort Saint Privé rode to the rescue, and the French wavered and broke. Only the Maid still sat her horse unmoved, while the crossbows volleyed arrows and the culverins spat stones. "Follow me," she cried, "if there be a dozen of you that are not cowards!" It was enough; the flying squadrons wheeled, and as the sun went down below the brimming Loire, the ensign of the fleur-de-lys floated gaily from the ramparts.

Yet the following day, when Jeanne rode to the Burgundy Gate, she and a troop of horse along with her, they found it closed against them. For the generals had an inkling that she meant to assault the Boulevard, the very bulwark of the English strength, and their hearts misgave them at

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the madcap venture. Accordingly they sent Raoul de Gaucourt, bailiff of Orleans, and bade him guard the gate. But if you have a notion that heaven is on your side, you do not lose time paltering with bailiffs, and Jeanne Darc headed a cavalry charge sheer in the middle of his cries and protestations. Through the gate she went, out and away, and joined her army on the southerly bank, an army which had found itself, and was prepared to follow her blindfold to the smoking verge of hell.

All day long she played upon the Boulevard with artillery, resolved to force an entrance ; since immediately behind the Boulevard a drawbridge led into the fort of Les Tourelles, and the English knew, and the French knew, how if once this fort were captured, the siege was at an end. But the Boulevard held out with a will, and finally, to make matters worse, the Maid was wounded. Nor did the mischance take her unawares, for already on the 22nd of April, when still encamped before

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Blois, she had foretold that on the 7th of May she would be hurt by an arrow through the shoulder, and this saying of hers was set down in writing at the time.

The bolt hit her above the breast, and stuck out beyond the shoulder-blade a hand's breadth and more. They carried her to a vineyard close by, and drew forth the arrow, dressing the wound with oil, but when they would have muttered charms to cure it, she said she had sooner die than be so eased.

Straightway the garrison took heart of grace, because the witch of the Armagnacs was gone from out the battle ; therefore the Dauphin's troops were beaten off, and Dunois gave the signal to retire. Jeanne heard that signal from the vineyard where she lay, and started up, unmindful of her wound. Meat or drink she had tasted none since daybreak, and then only a manchet of bread and a cup of country wine, but her strength was not yet spent. In a trice she was back at the Boulevard renewing the

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attack, as light of step upon the scaling ladder as once upon the dun hill slopes of Vermont. Moreover, she caused to be fired sundry shots, which were a sign appointed to La Hire that the Boulevard would shortly surrender, and that he must advance the rear-guard speedily, reinforcing the assault on Les Tourelles. And by the time his troopers came alongside, the Boulevard had been taken, sure enough.

They fought like beasts at bay, Sir William Glasdale and his gallant English, nor did they yield themselves to man alive but only to the water and the fire; for it was a French fire-boat which destroyed the drawbridge, so that every mother's son atop of it died drowning in the moat, and the pity of the spectacle did move the Maid to tears, though Glasdale was her mortal foe and named her with dishonour.

Twilight—and the end in sight, and a few stars peeping, corpse-candles to the slain. Nightfall—and ringing hoof-beats on the road,

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for a mounted courier sped in haste to the Dauphin. The fort was fallen, and the siege was raised ; the ablest generals of France had fumbled at the task full seven months, a slip of a girl achieved it in three days.

Rejoicing crowds ran riot through the streets, the jolly bonfires made a noon of midnight, and cannon that had ceased to talk of death now roared like boon companions at a fair. But Jeanne went to bed early, and slept until morning ; and when morning broke, Sunday the 8th of May in the year of God 1429, there was heard a music blithe as marriage bells, the note of Talbot's bugles sounding the retreat.

NOTES TO PART II

Note 6, p. 28.—Jeanne Darc was never subject to what is commonly meant by trance, ecstasy, hemi-anæsthesia, and the like, nor did she betray the least symptoms either of hysteria or dual personality. For my own part I am entirely convinced that there must be some explanation of her genius, midway between the inadmissibly miraculous and the merely pathological, and I am equally convinced that whatever the explanation may prove to be, none of us has hit upon it yet.

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Note 7, p. 39.—In the Palais de Justice at Poitiers, anciently the residence of the Counts of Poitou and Dukes of Aquitaine, there is a hall, La Salle des Pas Perdus, which claims on very scanty evidence to have been the scene of the Maid's trial. It is far more probable that she was examined at the Hôtel de la Rose, the lodging of Councillor Rabateau.

Note 8, p. 42.—“ Le Roi, attendu qu'on ne trouve point de mal en la dite pucelle, fors que bien, humilité, virginité, dévotion, honnêteté, simplese, . . . ne la doit empêcher d'aller à Orleans avec ses gens d'armes, car la doubter ou délaisser sans apparence de mal seroit repugner au saint Esprit, et se rendre indigne de l'aide de Dieu.”

Note 9, p. 42.—Some accounts have it that Jeanne went first to Chinon, and afterwards to Tours, and if she left Poitiers on the Thursday in Holy Week, March 24th, she very likely spent Easter at Chatellerault. The Good Friday of 1429 fell upon Lady Day, and stirring events were looked for; compare the old proverb:

“ When our Lord lies down in our Lady's lap,
England is come to a great mishap.”

Note 10, p. 44.—There is practically no evidence for the tradition that this sword once belonged to the hero Charles Martel, who seven centuries earlier checked the Saracen invasion of France.

Note 11, p. 45.—About these banners there is some confusion. The great square standard of the army had upon one side, unquestionably, the picture of our Lord as King of Heaven, adored by angels, the world between his hands; and on the opposite side, according to various witnesses, a picture of the Virgin Mary in Annunciation, while the regimental pennon, smaller and three-cornered, bore the emblem of the dove; but in other descriptions

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the order is reversed. There was yet a third banner, displaying the crucifix, with the attendant figures of the Madonna and St John, carried in procession by the clergy who accompanied the troops. It is possible that only this third banner was consecrated at St Saviour's.

Note 12, p. 49.—A point seldom in dispute.

Note 13, p. 49.—The mode of address was purely ceremonial, since neither Henry VI nor his uncle, Duke John of Bedford, were personally present before the walls of Orleans.

PART III .

RHEIMS

“ I see in the world the intellect of man,
That sword, the energy his subtle spear,
The knowledge which defends him like a shield—
Everywhere ; but they make not up, I think,
The marvel of a soul like thine, earth's flower
She holds up to the softened gaze of God ! ”

BROWNING.

THE siege of Orleans once raised, Jeanne returned immediately to Tours, since this was the first city in Touraine, and loyal to the lilies above all other. (Note 14, p. 89.) Surely, if ever the cities of the world are called to judgment, that little town shall have good cause to bless itself, forasmuch as it loved the Maid devoutly, and gave her happy days within its walls.

The Dauphin came from Chinon to receive

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her, and ennobled her by the title of Du Lys, her and her kindred and their heirs after them, and the women of this name, so he decreed, should in marrying ennoble their husbands ; further, he devised her a coat of arms, the lilies of France upon a field azure, and the crown of France at a sword's point. Yet to Jeanne Darc these honours were mere trumpery, and though she accepted them for her kinsfolk, she refused them for herself, beseeching the Dauphin if indeed he would do her pleasure, straightway to march to Rheims.

But he on the contrary sat him down at his leisure in the palace of Tours (Note 15, p. 90), and an ill counsellor encouraged him, as a false physician encourages a sick man in the langours and whimsies. The Loire, said La Tremouille, was studded thick with English strongholds, so that it were sheer foolery to take the road to Rheims, and the royal exchequer besides was emptier than a last year's nest. But Dunois, Bastard of

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Orleans, upheld the Maid, therefore the Dauphin halted between two opinions. Poor soul, he had a mad father and a bad mother, the which excuse must serve him, both here and hereafter.

Daily Jeanne went to Saint Gatien's, the cathedral church of Tours, and prayed God for the moving of the Dauphin's mind, since truly he seemed as loath to enter Rheims as though he were bidden thither to his burying. Small comfort was it that she dwelt in a mansion, in the stead of a farmer's croft; small comfort that the great court ladies looked at her enviously, for despite costly gear and broidered gloves, and curling pointed shoes, they lacked the grace of the country-bred girl, "the marvellous child," as folk had come to call her.

Now there was a man by name Hennes Poulvoir, whose trade was stitchery, the same that wrought the Maid her several standards. I said she knew happy days in Tours, and this I said because of Héliote, the

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standard-maker's daughter, who was of an age with her, and must have put her in mind of Hauviette time and again. Héliote was soon to be wed, and by and by Jeanne sent word from Bourges to greet her on the marriage day. Moreover the worthy burghesses of Tours, out of the love they bore the Maid, gave bread and wine against the wedding feast, and gladly would have given a richer gift, save that they needed every crown piece for the strengthening of their walls and fortifications. It is good to think how, though the Dauphin dallied and delayed, Jeanne did not lack a friend, and doubtless, as young girls will, they gossiped merrily together of an evening, while the wind freshened from the river, and the bells of Saint Gatien chimed for the "Ora pro nobis." (Note 16, p. 90.)

Already the month of May was waning, and the army had begun to disband. Then one day the Maid entered the presence-chamber where Charles sat in council, and

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threw herself at his knees, blushing and entreating: "Dear and gentle Dauphin, hold not such long councils nor so many, but hasten to your good city of Rheims, to receive holy unction and the crown of your fathers. Use me, use me, I shall only last a year." (Note 17, p. 90.)

At which he relented, and raised her up, and promised if she would go before him to capture all the strongholds of the Loire, he himself would follow. And with this knightly offer she must needs rest content.

Now when Jeanne said she should not last above a year, she knew in part and prophesied in part, yet at that time most certainly she had no presage of the end by fire, nor of her taking prisoner by the English. Indeed upon the road to Rheims her covert foe the Chancellor Archbishop, questioned her touching the manner of her death, to whom she gave answer in these words, "I know no more than any other. It shall be where

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and how God pleases." But though Jeanne knew not the span of her life, this much she knew for sure, that the span of her mission was a brief one, and that it were good to strike when the iron was hot.

Setting up a recruiting camp at Selles in Berry, she had mustered an army by the early days of June, and her generals were with her, Dunois and La Hire, the Marshal de Rais, and the Duke of Alençon. As yet the "pretty Duke" had not been free to fight, while his ransom to the English was in raising, but now it had been paid to the last écu, and his young Duchess trembled for his life. Jeanne, however, bade her keep a brave heart, since her lord should return to her safe and sound, and truly he took no hurt during that campaign, although at the storming of Jargeau he fought in the forefront of the battle.

Jargeau was the first stronghold guarding the approaches to the Loire, and the Maid, averse to bloodshed, proclaimed that if the

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garrison would yield, they should have a free passage for themselves and their horses. But the town was in possession of the Earl of Suffolk and his brother John de la Pole, men not minded to submit without a struggle. The fortifications had long been thought impregnable, yet Jeanne carried them by assault, and both the de la Poles were taken. They were of a high spirit, these two brothers, for the younger gave knighthood on the spot to the man who made him prisoner, lest it be said that any of the lordly house of Suffolk surrendered to a fellow of no worth ; while the elder would surrender to Jeanne only, and gallantly delivered up his sword into her hands.

At Jargeau, it fortunèd, she met a certain Katharine, a mystic of the baser sort, suffering ecstasies and trances and what not, for the troublous times bred many such, as will-o'-the-wisps are bred by the marsh vapours. This Katharine boasted nightly visitations from a white ghost lady, and

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the divining of hid treasure, wherewith to pay the whole French army in crocks of minted gold. Jeanne knew, none better, that passing strange things happen in the world, yet no less true for all that they are strange ; accordingly she resolved to test her, and both of them lay abed, and waited and waited, but before it had turned midnight the Maid fell fast asleep. " Which was a pity," quoth Katharine upon the morrow, " since at the middle night the white lady appeared, and communed with me of my mission." So Jeanne determined to keep better watch next time, and tarried broad awake till dawn, yet never a glimmer of the fantastical spectre did she see. Then she lost patience, and spoke her mind pretty plainly : " Your mission," said she, " is folly the merest. Go you home to your husband and children." Wherefore when the too, too clever people seek to belittle the Maid, and call her a visionary, let them remember that it is a small thing to see visions and hear voices, and quite

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another thing to raise the siege of Orleans. There have been many Katharines in the world; there has only been one Jeanne Darc.

Now about this time the High Constable of France, a man of renown but hostile to the Armagnacs, sought out the Maid and offered her his good services, suffering her to reconcile him with the Duke of Alençon, a surer token of her greatness and a clearer gain to France, than the storming of Jargeau, for it is easier to make a breach than mend it, to take a city than pacify a quarrel.

After these things the march began again, and men marvelled at her endurance, since she would bear her armour six days and nights together. The bridge of Meung she carried by assault, and de Rais was set to watch it, for there were English upon the farther side, while in the meantime de Richemont the Constable beleaguered the strong fortress of Beaugency. Jeanne encamped apart with the main army, and

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Talbot offered her battle the same night, but she declined it at the bidding of her Voices, which said if she would bide until the morrow, de Richemont should rejoin her, and the Marshal likewise, to the great strengthening of her forces. And this assuredly came to pass ; Beaugency surrendered at the rising of the sun, and Talbot recalled his men from Meung, so that there was no longer urgent need to keep a watch upon the bridge. Yet whether or not she had the second sight, let fools judge, since it is more than the wisest can say.

Early the next morning, the 18th of June, the enemy began to move, as Talbot had it in his mind to choose a point of vantage for the battle. " Have you good spurs ? " asked the Maid of her generals. " You will surely make use of them. These men are ours." At Patay she overtook the English, on level land of a forlorn waste aspect, such as you may see in countless battlefields, the graves of some lost cause. But if Patay was the

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grave of a lost cause, the Plantagenet dominion throughout France, it was also a birthplace, the first French victory in the open for near upon a century, and from the ashes of the slain the phoenix of French honour rose renewed. Therefore on the world's red roll-call Patay holds no mean rank, and it was won by a seventeen-year-old girl against the veteran chivalry of England. Talbot himself was taken prisoner. "The fortune of battle!" quoth he, the grim, grey war-dog, caught at last.

The fight endured till sundown; already the shadows were stepping stealthily across the stricken plain, and truly a woeful scene they traversed, for a fallen nation, like a fallen world, may in no wise be redeemed save by a mortal agony and bloody sweat. Amongst the wounded was a certain poor fellow whom the French hurt and left to perish, because he had not wherewith to pay his ransom. It is a hard thing, and a lonesome thing, to meet death far from home,

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when the sea is salt between your folks and you, and you know that alien earth shall weigh you down ; but his was a good end none the less, since Jeanne Darc knelt beside him at the last, and eased his dying.

Night fell, upon that soul and many another, and upon all the smitten field, and all the joyous clamour of the troops. “ Live for ever, Maid of Orleans ! ” they cried ; “ live for ever ! ” Yet she answered, looking about her with grave eyes : “ The praise is to God. In a thousand years, in a thousand years, the English power over France shall not revive again.”

Orleans, the glad and grateful, prepared to receive the victors, prepared to receive the Dauphin also, but the Dauphin did not come, since La Tremouille had bidden him welcome at his own castle of Sully-sur-Loire, and here they were mightily taken up with their jongleurs and their falconers. To Sully-sur-Loire accordingly Jeanne went, and wrought

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the good work of a peacemaker, by reconciling de Richemont to the Dauphin, as already she had reconciled him to Alençon. For from the first day she set eyes on the Constable, she saw in him the one man able to finish her work. She would free France, and he should keep it free.

It may be that the victory of Patay had momentarily fired the Dauphin's courage, since now he agreed to take the road to Rheims. This was a bloodless march, a festal progress, and the highways were thronged with eager folk. Wise men sought the Maid's counsel on coinage and inheritance and deep problems of theology, while the old crones brought chaplets and crosses that she might bless them; but she only smiled and said, "Touch them yourselves. Your touch is as good as mine." The towns flung wide their gates at her approach—Gien and Auxerre, Saint Florentin, Saint Fal, and Troyes and Chalons.

At Troyes, so it chanced, Jeanne fell in

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with Brother Richard, who was a wandering friar of repute, his preaching all of Anti-Christ and portents and the advent of the Doom, and himself as scared of necromancy as any old widow woman. Moreover, he had lent an ear to tavern talk, how white butterflies hovered round the banner of the Maid, and the like wonder-stories not a few. Therefore when he beheld her he was in a great taking, and sprinkled holy water lest he should see her mount a broomstick. But she laughed at him gaily : " Come nearer," quoth she, " come nearer ; I shall not fly away." Doubtless Jeanne Darc was a mystic, yet she had no one thought in common with the Richards and the Katharines of her time, whose mysticism was a brainsick thing, and sheer self-seeking if the truth were told, while hers was fit alike for earth and heaven, as the sun which holds the planets in their courses disdains not to ripen a poor man's pot-herbs.

On the 16th of July, all in the hushed

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blue summer even, the towers of Rheims cathedral sprang to view, and if the Dauphin's pulses failed to quicken at the sight, more shame to him and the race that begat him. The English and Burgundian garrison had fled, and the gates stood friendly open like the gates of home; therefore the army entered in a holiday humour, and the coronation was appointed for the morrow.

Five hours of a summer's morn it took, turning the Dauphin Charles into a king; if they had stopped to make a man of him, God knows they had been in Rheims cathedral till this day. First a company of knights must ride to the abbey of Saint Remi, and fetch the holy chrism, the Sainte Ampoule, which served for the anointing of all the Kings of France, ever since a white dove brought it down from heaven at the crowning of Clovis, and the story is as true as most. The knights rode into the cathedral with a lordly clatter, and the sacred vessel was delivered to the Archbishop of Rheims, who

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set it upon the altar. The Dauphin meanwhile tarried at the altar steps, by his side the Maid of Orleans in cloth of gold and bright silks richly furred, her banner between her hands. So you stood, Jeanne Darc, the uncrowned queen of all those solemn rites, you white sword-lily from the pleasaunce gardens of the Lord !

The midday sunlight smote the lofty oriels, blazing forth to the memory of venerated dead, and set a myriad jewels winking in the glass. The cathedral was densely thronged, and among the press one might have seen (or might have overlooked, more likely) two homely figures, rustics both. These had no eyes for the goodly horses and goldsmith's work and armour, nor yet for vested priests and Sainte Ampoule, but only for the Maid, since they were none other than Jacques Darc and Durand Lassois. And strange thoughts, truly, must have filled their minds, as bees swarm to and fro within a hive. Who knows if the bees in

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Lassois' hive went humming a blithe song ?
Who knows if the bees in Jacques Darc's
hive had an ugly sting about them ?

Presently came a stir at the west doorway, and the twelve high peers of the realm made their state entrance, of whom one must needs stand proxy for Burgundian Philip. Then the Dauphin, meetly anointed, took oath in the presence of his nobles to govern justly and with mercy, to keep the peace of the Church (which was no light matter, seeing there were two Popes), and to preserve the commons from exactions (which was no light matter either, seeing money must be had by hook or by crook). After that he set the crown upon his head, and the people cried, "Noel ! Noel !" (Note 18, p. 90), because a Valois reigned again in France.

Now when the king was crowned, he turned to the Maid beside him, and bade her require a boon of him, as Herod bade Salome, whatsoever she listed and he would give it her. And Jeanne did not crave her enemy's



“AND BADE HER REQUIRE A BOON OF HIM”

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head in a charger, though the head of La Tremouille had been no great loss, but asked this merely, that her native village of Domremy should be free from taxes. The which was granted, and faithfully fulfilled three hundred years and upwards; thus in the official records of taxation one might have turned a page and happened on the entry, "Domremy — Rien. La pucelle." (Note 19, p. 90.) Yet by and by the lava torrents of the Titanic volcano that men call the French Revolution, buried all things ancient, whether they were good or whether they were evil, and this good custom perished with the rest. The Maid of Orleans to-day has much she did not ask for, statues here and statues there, whole libraries of print to tell her story, votive shrines and votive tablets, altar lilies prim and pure; but the only reward she did ask is denied her.

After the coronation was spread a sumptuous banquet, all manner of meats and sparkling wines in plenty, since the folk of the Middle

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Ages loved good cheer and roistering, and long, long pomps, like to a fairy tale. Jeanne made her kinsmen welcome at the feast, seeing she was not one to think meanly of the hearth that bred her, nor have her head turned with the splendours of a court, which are apt to finish in disaster, even as the lightning is lackeyed by the thunder. In truth, she was wearying for home: "I wish," sighed she, "I might go back to my mother, who would be very glad to see me."

The king once crowned, Jeanne urgently counselled the march to Paris, yet his fitful energy had flickered out, and already he was treating with the Duke of Burgundy to yield him Paris upon easy terms. By force of arms he should win it, said the Maid, in twenty days if he would play the man; but were he to dally over much, the English would dispute the mastery of France another twenty years. And a truer word was never spoken. (Note 20, p. 90.) Thus she pushed and

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persuaded him into leaving Rheims, yet after half a dozen leagues his heart misgave him, and he turned aside to pray for good success ; and though prayer and the things of the spirit were meat and drink to Jeanne Darc, her patience was tried, and sorely, by a poltroonery which mimicked devotion.

Presently, however, she had him under way again, and as upon the march to Rheims, so now upon the march to Paris, the enemy's strongholds surrendered each in turn. There went a report among Frenchmen that the English were a superstitious people, and sure it is that terror of the sorceress had spread like the spreading of the plague. Yet those about her, who watched her daily, saw only a maid of rustic speech and modest demeanour. "In all she does," wrote the Duke of Alençon, "save the affairs of war, she is a very simple young girl ; but in war-like things most skilful, acting as prudently as a captain of thirty years' service. More

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especially she is marvellous when directing artillery."

Thanks to the king's prayers and dawdlings and palterings with Burgundy, it was turned September before the army encamped at La Chapelle, a village close to Paris; nigh twenty years were over and gone since Charles looked last upon his capital, and in the meanwhile it had crowned his rival. On the morning of the 8th, feast of the birthday of the Virgin Mother, Jeanne attacked the gate of Saint Honoré, keeping half her men in reserve to guard against a sortie from Saint Denis. The trench was very deep about the walls, but, testing it with her lance, she ordered that piles of faggots should be brought to fill it to the brim, and surely if slowly the French troops made headway. Yet by sunset, as ill luck fared, she was wounded, and they carried her forth of the field, protesting, "I must win Paris now, or die." The live-long night she tossed upon her bed, and again

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and again the cry broke from her : “ It might have been taken ! It might have been taken ! ”

Soon as the morrow lightened she was astir, for Alençon, she knew, had thrown a bridge across the Seine, and she purposed to attack the city on the farther side. Then they told her that the bridge was broken down, an enemy having destroyed it overnight, and the enemy was not the Duke of Bedford, nor yet Sir John Falstaff, but Charles VII, anointed King of France. He would, said he, make truce with Burgundy, and retreat beyond the Loire, promising to molest Paris no further. At this Jeanne went to the great church of Saint Denis, which was the burial-place of the French kings, and hung up her white armour as an offering ; and the English carried it away, none knows whither.

But though Charles relinquished Paris and moved south, he would not let the Maid return to Domremy, lest he should have need

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of her, and in an evil hour she suffered it to be so, because the line of Valois was precious in her sight, and because, for all his faint heart and his fopperies, she deemed him the Lord's anointed. Hawking, hunting, serenading, purposeless, inglorious, the royal household trailed from place to place ; into Touraine they drifted and out again, from Poitou to Berry and from Berry to Poitou. Michaelmas went by, and Hallowmas, Christmas and Candlemas (those old-time altar fires which make bright the winter), until the brief allotted year was wellnigh spent. Small wonder that Jeanne drooped and pined, as you may have seen the poor caged eagles languish upon the Capitolian hill at Rome. True, now and then she was grudgingly permitted to go to the rescue of some beleaguered town ; of such sort the relief of Saint Pierre-le-Moustier, a thing excellently done, brilliant and swift like sheet-lightning. But the relieving of La Charité she must needs

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abandon, for though the faithful cities of Bourges and Orleans gave freely of their poverty, the supplies proved all too scant, and the king sent never a sack of meal towards the victualling of his troops. He had no fear of God before his eyes, only the fear of Philip, Duke of Burgundy, and when the Maid desired to enter Normandy, and fight a bold campaign with Dunois by her side, she might not have her will.

Yet as the spring advanced, and treaty after treaty had miscarried, it was plain to see that Philip dealt treacherously, and the king lashed himself into a sudden frenzy, fitful and unreasoning, like the tantrums of a shrew. All truces, he declared, were at an end, and the Maid should go unchidden to the succour of Compiègne and Melun and Lagny-sur-Marne.

Now at Lagny-sur-Marne there chanced to be a baby three days old, so grievously sick that many supposed it to be dead. "Verily," quoth Jeanne, "it looked as black as my

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coat." But she prayed to God and Mary Mother, and the little one recovered, which matter was made much of at her trial. She set herself up for a miracle-worker, the judges asserted, and claimed to raise the dead through her glammers and enchantments.

Already forebodings of evil had fallen athwart her spirit, like lengthening shadows pointing the one way, her Voices having told her that she would be taken by the English, and during Easter Week, while she stood in the trenches of Melun, directing the assault, they spoke to her yet more plainly: "Daughter of God," said they, "before the feast of Saint John at midsummer thou shalt be made prisoner; but disquiet not thyself, our Lord will succour thee."

Compiègne was hard pressed. South of the town lay forest, and north the river Oise, spanned by a fortified bridge, and bridge and town were held for Charles VII by Guillaume de Flavy, the Governor. Mean-

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while, upon the farther bank, encamped the king's enemies, enough and to spare, Duke Philip himself at the village of Coudon, de Noyelle at Margny, John of Luxembourg at Clairoux, and a garrison of English at Venette.

The Maid entered Compiègne from the south, and immediately resolved on a sortie. It was the 23rd of May 1430, the last day of her freedom, and I would she might have passed it in the forest, among fugitive scents and dimpsy shadows, where it lay all fragrant after the night's rain, and garrulous with innumerable leaves, for she ever loved the glorious company of trees, the goodly fellowship of flowers. But at five of the clock, in the clear and sparkling weather, she was leading her troops across the bridge, mounted on a dapple grey horse, her gold and scarlet mantle fluttering bravely in the breeze.

She aimed her attack at the hamlet of Margny, and de Noyelle and his men were soon in full retreat towards Clairoux, when

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it happened that the English made a sally from Venette, upon which the rearguard of her army fell into a panic, and fled helter-skelter back to Compiègne, the enemy pursuing. Jeanne strove to rally them, and outdid all her former feats of valour, but the lot was cast for the battle, and cast against her. As to Guillaume de Flavy, he was in a strait place that day, since he durst not use his artillery, lest he should fire on friend and foe alike; accordingly he caused the drawbridge to be lowered and raised again in a twinkling, the foremost fliers once inside the walls. And so doing he did what seemed to him best, and no dishonour should sully him, for all that he closed his gates against Jeanne Darc, and shut her out from safety.

They forced her off the highway on to marshy meadows, they hemmed her in, they ringed her round, and she had but a handful along with her, amongst them one of her brothers, and D'Aulon, her master of the horse. An archer in the service of Wandonne (himself

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in the service of a greater, John of Luxembourg), he it was that took her prisoner, and a good day's work it proved for him and his, since the King of England presently appointed him a pension. But though the Maid surrendered as needs must, give her parole of honour she would not. "I have," said she, "passed my word to another."

Tidings of the capture ran apace, and an unhallowed revelry broke loose in Paris steeples. Brazen-throated, brazen-hearted, the joy peals clashed and clanged, as belfry called to belfry, hoarse with glee, that the witch of the Armagnacs was taken.

NOTES TO PART III

Note 14, p. 62.—Witness the following prayer to Saint Martin, patron of Tours: "Monseigneur saint Martin soit nostre advocat envers nostre doulx sauveur Jhesucrist qui doint bonne santé et bonne vie et longue a nostre bon roy Charles et la royne, . . . et a tous ceulx du sang royal aiant bonne volenté, et ceulx qui mauvaie l'ont Dieu les vueille amander tellement qu'ilz reconnoissent leur doicturier seigneur. Aussi vueille delivrer tous prisonniers du sang real qui sont ès mains de noz ennemys. Aussi que nous puissions avoir bonne paix et union en ce

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reaulme a l'onneur et au prouffit du roy et de la chose publique, a la confusion et deshonneur de ses anciens ennemys estranges et privez."—From "Les Beaux Miracles de Monseigneur saint Martin."

Note 15, p. 63.—Of this palace nothing now remains, except one tower called La Tour des Guises.

Note 16, p. 65.—Refrain of the Virgin's Litany, sung at vespers. The familiar call to prayer, known as the evening Angelus or Ave Maria, was not in use till the succeeding reign, when Louis XI appointed this form of national intercession during his wars with Charles the Bold of Burgundy.

Note 17, p. 66.—Some historians are of opinion that her appeal was made at Loches, and not at Tours.

Note 18, p. 78.—An acclamation borrowed from Christmas, but formerly used at other seasons of rejoicing.

Note 19, p. 79.—La pucelle—the Maid.

Note 20, p. 80.—Twenty years later, the English still held the greater part of Normandy, with the fortresses of Picardy, Anjou, and Maine, but those of Anjou and Maine were shortly relinquished as the price of a marriage between Margaret of Anjou and Henry VI.

PART IV

ROUEN

“ Who is this that cometh from Domremy ? Who is she in bloody coronation robes from Rheims ? Who is she that cometh . . . from walking the furnaces of Rouen ? This is she, the shepherd girl, counsellor that had none for herself, whom I choose, bishop, for yours. . . . She it is, bishop, that shall plead for you ; yes, bishop—SHE—when heaven and earth are silent.”

DE QUINCEY.

“ JEANNE is grown proud, and because she loved bright raiment God has failed her.” So wrote Regnault de Chartres, the Archbishop, when he sent word to Rheims of her capture. But there was still an honest man in France, for all he was an Archbishop, to wit, of Embrun. He likewise put pen to paper speedily, and wrote his mind to Charles VII in plain, homely fashion : “ To recover this maid and raise her ransom, spare neither money nor price, however

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great they be, lest you incur the stain of a treachery most blameworthy." Moreover, the faithful folk of Tours wore black to betoken mourning, and went in procession from Saint Gatien's to Saint Martin's, offering up prayers for her deliverance ; and in songs and ballads she had yet other remembrancers that might not be silenced. (Note 21, p. 131.)

Now after Jeanne was taken they brought her first to Clairoix, and next to Beaulieu of Vermandois, and thence to Beaurevoir. The Regent, one may suppose, cherished never a thought at bed or board, save how to get her into his own possession, and as she had crowned the Valois king, he resolved to attain her of witchcraft, that he might make void the crowning. But he knew well enough if he desired to have her, he must pay for her, since by right of battle she was reckoned the prisoner of John of Luxembourg, vassal to the Duke of Burgundy, Philip misnamed the Good. So he set about levying

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a ransom which should secure her to the English : “ Jehanne la pucelle,” as he styled her, “ reported a witch, leader of the hosts of the Dauphin,” and when the gold was come by, sent one Pierre Cauchon to treat with his allies. This same Cauchon, Bishop of Beauvais, had gotten his see from the Burgundians, but the victorious Armagnacs had driven him forth, for which cause he bore a grudge against Jeanne Darc that rankled in the wicked heart of him ; the English, besides, promised him the archbishopric of Rouen if he would be their cat’s paw, and pull them their chestnuts deftly out of the fire.

The Maid meanwhile tarried a close prisoner at Beaurevoir, yet was she honourably treated as befits a prisoner of war, in the care of two noble ladies, her namesakes, Jeanne de Bethune the wife of Luxembourg, and Jeanne his aunt, who used her with compassion and all fair courtesies. But she knew no heartsease day nor night for grieving over

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Compiègne, since the Burgundians had vowed to put its people to the sword from seven years old and upwards. So she determined to hazard her escape, and took the bedding in her turret chamber, fashioning it into a make-shift rope, and letting herself out by the window. But the rope gave way ; yet though she fell full sixty feet not a bone was broken, only she was retaken hurt and bruised, and neither ate nor drank for several days. Now this that she had attempted, she attempted it contrary to the counsel of Saint Catherine, who bade her bear all things joyfully, seeing God would succour Compiègne before Martinmas, the which came true. Later her judges fastened on the matter, and insisted she had sought to end her life.

Philip of Burgundy and John of Luxembourg knew not what way to turn, for time pressed, and money was no commoner than usual. At first they never doubted that the French king would offer ransom, more especially as he held two prisoners of

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note, Talbot and Sir John Chandos, the better to drive his bargain. Yet the woods lay wilted in the summer heat, and the stubble fields lay ravished of their harvest, and still not a whisper of a ransom stole from beyond the Loire ; while all the time Pierre Cauchon begged and threatened, the blood-money in his hand, and the swords of Merry England at his back. So then Duke Philip would wait no longer, but took the price, and paid it over to the lord of Luxembourg, ten thousand livres in full, which was the sum appointed as a royal ransom ; a royal ransom for the little shepherdess.

Her enemies moved her hither and thither, fearing a rescue, though indeed they might have spared themselves their labour, since Charles VII, frost-bound in doubts and dreads, stirred not a step and lifted not a finger. It was November when the Maid reached Arras, and from Arras they brought her to Crotoy Castle by the sea, a melancholy place enough, with nothing for her eyes to

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rest upon save dipping gulls and pallid weedy sands, and nothing in her ears the live-long day but the breach of the wintry surf. Yet even here she was not all forlorn, seeing she bears record that the archangel Michael appeared to her at Crotoy. From thence they took her to Saint Valéry, and by ship to Dieppe, and from Dieppe to Rouen.

Now Rouen was a stronghold of the English power, the Kings of England having reigned as Norman Dukes three hundred years and over. Young Henry VI was present in the town, and truly it was no less his capital than London, maybe more so, the heart of that great Angevin empire which linked the Firth of Forth to the snow-mitred Pyrenees. Rouen had not lacked for stirring scenes when the long keels of the Norsemen were spied upon the Seine, or the gallant vessel, "Notre Dame de Bon Voyage," returned from distant Africa, carrying pepper and and ivory and blinking gold; but never had it been more deeply stirred than

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when it knew the Maid within its walls. (Did she mark the coat of arms, I wonder, emblazoned on the gateway? The lamb, that to her was like to prove a wolf.)

Doubtless some sit in judgment upon traitorous Rouen because it played the Valois false. Well, they shall hear how the Valois dealt by Rouen. At Lammastide in the month of August King Harry V had laid siege to the city, but before he got his will and took possession, the ground was stark with January frosts. Midway between the town and the leaguer of the enemy encamped a horde of miserable wretches whom the Rouennais dared not feed, since what meagre provision they had must go to the garrison, themselves mere skeletons, their lean bones chattering in their coats of mail. Wherefore the folk beyond the walls grew crazed with famine, and many rushed upon the English watch-towers, and upon the English spears, to make an end. From time to time amid this lamentable host a child was born, and raised

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to the battlements that a priest might christen it, and lower it again, poor little one, into the gulf of torment whence it came. Only on Christmas Day, for remembrance of the mercy which befell at Christmas-tide, King Harry sent meat and drink to the perishing, yet the gracious hours once past, he hardened his heart anew, since the Plantagenets were a cruel breed, from father to son.

Now in their extremity the Rouennais appealed again and again to the royalty of France, but they appealed in vain. True messages and promises came in plenty ; of succour and deliverance never a sign. So when at last the town surrendered and its honour bit the dust, the burghers vowed deep vengeance on the Armagnacs and upon all the house of Valois, whose kingly word was brittle as vile earthenware. Nor had they long to wait, for in the coming of the Maid they saw their opportunity, and marked their victim.

The trial was directed by Pierre Cauchon

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Bishop of Beauvais, on the pretext that Compiègne lay within his diocese, and such as knew that it lay in the diocese of Soissons, had wit enough to keep this knowledge to themselves. A prisoner of the Church, to be examined for heresy and witchcraft, Jeanne should have been taken to the tolerable Church prisons in the Rue Saint Romain, hard by the cathedral; but instead they brought her to a fortress in the Place Bouvreuil, known as the fort of Philip Augustus. At the rearmost entry were a stairway and a dungeon underneath it, a low dark cell with only a plank bed to rest upon; here, day and night, the Maid was chained to a beam, and day and night was guarded by a handful of men-at-arms in the service of Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick. (Note 22, p. 131.)

Soon as the little King of England had signed the needful order, committing her for trial, the Bishop set to work to pack his court, which took him a couple of months and

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more, since even hostile Rouen still held brave men and true. Of such sort were Nicholas de Houpeville and Jean Lohier, lawyers both of them, and both of them would have it that the trial was illegal. For one thing, said Lohier, it ought not to take place in a military stronghold, bringing the suasion of armed force to bear upon the matter ; the King of France was party to the quarrel, and should be duly represented ; the accused besides was under age, and further she must be given the benefit of counsel. " It is easy to see," quoth Beauvais, " on which foot he limps. By Saint John, the fellow shall make no odds. We will continue our fine trial, our *beau procès* ; we will finish as we have begun." And he sent to arrest him, but Lohier had fled the town. Nicholas de Houpeville, for his part, said that the trial at Poitiers should suffice, and thanks to this plain speaking he found himself in prison.

Others, however, proved more complaisant. True, the cathedral canons made a protest,

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but withdrew it fast enough when the Bishop hinted at a loss of rations. Lemaitre, the Vice-Inquisitor, he too was loath to meddle in so black a business, yet he too yielded presently, and sat among the judges. There were near upon a hundred of them, Dominicans mostly, to match trained wits against a peasant girl, some better, some worse, but cowards one and all.

First came the President: "Pierre," thus he styled himself, "by divine mercy Bishop of Beauvais," and the divine mercy magnanimously suffered him to prate his fill, as is its wont. Next Nicholas Loiseleur, who wrought a tidy little spy-hole in the wall of the Maid's prison, and eavesdropped her confessions; moreover, he would visit her disguised, pretending to be of her own country, from the marches of Lorraine, and seeking to entrap her in her talk. There was Thomas Courcelles, with his meek downcast eyes and tiger's heart; there were Pierre Maurice and Martin Ladvenu,

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Nicholas Midi and Guillaume Erard, Massieu and d'Estivet and Isambard de la Pierre.

One Manchon had been appointed as Recorder, and afterwards, when Jeanne was burnt, he grew so horribly disturbed in spirit that he bought a missal book out of the money paid him for his services, and prayed most diligently on behalf of her soul. Truly no monstrous beast at the sea-bottom could prove a stranger sight to look upon than many a Christian conscience ! Yet this much may be said in his favour, he recorded faithfully, while the English clerks set down such matter as was to their liking, and garbled the rest.

On the 21st of February, in the fortress chapel, the trial began, but after that day it was held in the Ornament Room, at the end of the great hall, since Beauvais, holy man, would not brook a hubbub in the sanctuary. Jeanne sat by a table, with Manchon the Recorder, and behind a curtain were the two English clerks ; English sentries guarded the door (of whom one, the brave fellow,

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saluted her as she entered), while over against the doorway, row upon row, tier upon tier, wheresoever you might look—the black Dominican habit. They had her clipped and caged at last, God's dove among the crows.

When the Maid appeared before her judges, they required of her an oath to speak truth concerning religion. "Yet it may well be," she said, "that you will ask me some things on which I shall tell you the truth, and others on which I shall not tell it you." Thus she gave them fair warning; for there is a modesty in matters spiritual, and she was little minded to strip bare her soul, nor would she so much as repeat a Pater Noster in the hearing of her judges. She implored of them that she might attend mass, and that Churchmen of her own party might be present, but Beauvais cut her short. He was full of all kindness and piety, he said, desiring only her return to the paths of righteousness, pained above measure by her fall from grace,

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and more especially by the spectacle of her hair, *taillé en rond*, after the manner of a boy, which was most shocking, and clearly contrary to the will of God.

During the months of February and March there were six public examinations in the Ornament Room, and nine private examinations in the prison. Meanwhile, from lack of air, the Maid fell sick, and even though the fever was upon her a chosen company of judges thronged her cell and plied her with questions. "Good sirs," she pleaded, "if I come to die, I pray you bury me in hallowed ground; yet if you will not, I commit myself unto my Lord." A marvellous great saying, truly, when scarce a man of the Middle Ages but thought his soul clean perished altogether, lacking the Church's blessing on his grave. As for the Earl of Warwick, he bade the physician cure her speedily, lest dying she should cheat the stake, and this he said in her presence.

The accusations brought against her

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smack of the mad-house. She had trysted with the Fair Folk of the magic Middle World, honouring them in heathen songs and dances, and delved by moonlight for the mandrake root, after the fashion of witches : She did not make known her visions to a priest : It was unmaidenly of her to bear arms : (" Yet as to women's proper work," she said, " there is many another woman to do that ; howbeit in spinning and sewing I fear no goodwife in Rouen.") She caused grave scandal putting on male dress : (It served for camp and battle, she replied, and served her still to guard her modesty. " Nevertheless," she added, " my dress in no sort weighs upon my soul. Let me hear mass, and if it please you, I will wear a woman's smock and hood.") At Orleans she had been idolatrously worshipped by the mob : (" The poor grateful people," said she, " did indeed kiss my hands, but when I could, I hindered them.") During the coronation she vaingloriously displayed her banner : (" It shared the perils," she flashed out, " and

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had a right to share in the rejoicing.") At Lagny-sur-Marne she claimed to raise the dead: She dealt profanely, by attacking Paris on a holy day, and marking some of her military despatches with a cross: She attempted her own life at Beaurevoir: (This she denied, admitting the while how she disobeyed her Saints, and received prompt penance through the hurt she did herself in falling from the turret.)

Touching the "king's secret" she remained loyally silent: "The more you constrain me to swear," said she, "the less I will tell you." Yet of her Voices she at times spoke freely. There was never a day but her dear Saints came to the castle, and with them a sweet and pleasant light, though she could not always hear what they were saying, because of the laughter and the pother of the guards. How did she know they were good spirits? By the good doctrine and comfort that they gave her. Three things had she asked of them in prayer; aid for the French,

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deliverance from prison, her soul's salvation ; and they answered on this wise : " Have no care of thy martyrdom, since thou wilt be released with glorious victory, and surely come to the kingdom of Paradise."

Again and again the judges questioned her, oftenest concerning the Bright Folk of the fatal Arbre Fée, her male attire, and the nature of her visions. These last they made light of ; she had been fasting, they maintained, when she communed with angels in the orchard at high noon. Yet Jeanne denied it resolutely, and who could know but she ? Sometimes they talked all together, sometimes they darted from point to point, seeking to entangle her in words. They asked her whether she were in a state of grace, and should she say no, they had condemned her out of her own mouth, and should she say yes, they had held her guilty of presumption. Wherefore her prudent answer is a thing to wonder at—" If I am not, I pray God make me so, and if I am, I pray God keep me so."

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They inquired of her who was the true Pope (a perilous pitfall in the days of the Great Schism), and swift as a weaver's shuttle came her baffling question in reply, "Are there then two Popes?" Was not her capture a token of the divine wrath? "Since God has suffered me to be captured, it is for the best." Does the Lord love the French and hate the English? "Of the love or hate of God toward the English I know nothing, but this I know, they will be driven out of France. In seven years shall they lose Paris, and I am sore vexed it is deferred so long."

Of the angels, Jeanne said, she had caused them to be pictured on her standards after such sort as she commonly saw them in church windows, but not as they appeared to herself, and how they did appear to her she refused to tell, nor would she answer vile or silly questions touching the nature of their raiment and their hair. Often indeed her replies were like the turning of a key in

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a lock: "I am not free to say. It does not bear upon the case. Ask me no more. Pass on." (Note 23, p. 131.) Or if her persecutors repeated themselves: "I have told you that already. Look in your own reports, and you shall find it."

Day after day brought floods of talk, bitter and barren as the Dead Sea, concerning her submission to the Church, but Beauvais and his hireling monks were not the Church, and well she knew it. "I believe," said she, "in the Church that is here below, and will maintain it with all my power; yet for my words and deeds, I refer me only to God, my Creator, whom I love from my heart. He is a good master; to him I look in everything and to none other." "Do your Voices then bid you disobey the Church?" "Surely no, but God must be served first. I would sooner die than renounce what I have done, seeing I came to the King of France by command of my Lord and of the Church Triumphant; to that Church I submit."

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Now among the judges there were some who wished her well, and one day Isambard de la Pierre put in a kindly word. A great Council, so he told her, was being held at Bâle, where Churchmen of all nations had assembled, and of her own party not a few; would she submit her cause to such a Council? But immediately Beauvais flew into a passion, and gobbled like an angry turkey-cock. "Hold your tongue in the devil's name!" he cried, "or you shall have more to drink than you bargain for." Which was the Bishop's pretty fashion of saying that he meant to drown him, and Isambard fell silent.

Massieu also sought to do her a good turn, and fared no better. Between the prison and the Ornament Room lay a little chapel, and he would sometimes let her go aside to pray there. But d'Estivet, the watchful and malignant, discovered this, and put a stop to it, since he was hand and glove with Beauvais. "God knows," said Massieu,

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“ what will be the end ; yet for my part I see nothing in her save goodness and honour.” Upon which d’Estivet bade him take heed, lest haply he find himself in a dungeon, where never sun nor moon should lighten him.

Tardily towards the close of March the Maid was offered counsel, but she refused it, saying she would not depart from the counsel of her God. Then an April Easter came and went, and brought no boon of swelling buds or song-birds, and brought no blessings of the paschal altar : “ Yet our Lord,” said she to her judges, “ is able to make me hear mass in spite of you.” The examinations were now over, and the court withdrew to the Chapelle des Ordres, which lay at the north corner of the Bishop’s palace (as was very fitting, since in legend and story the north is ever deemed the devil’s side, and is the side of darkness). And there they sat consulting for near upon a month.

It was early in May when the judges debated whether or no they should put

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Jeanne to the torture, "and by this means restore her to the knowledge of the truth, and procure her salvation, gravely imperilled through sundry lying devices"—or in other words to wring from woman's weakness a confession of witchcraft and heresy. Indeed they showed her the torture-chamber, and the rack with the levers made ready, but she no more flinched at the sight of them than she flinched at the sight of battery and crossbow. "Were you to tear me limb from limb," quoth she, "I would not say otherwise than I have said, and if I did, I should afterwards affirm that you had wrested it out of me by force." Yet though the torture had been mooted, the more part of the judges pronounced against it, whether from mercy or policy who can tell? But Thomas Courcelles was favourable, and so was Loiseleur the spy.

Upon the 23rd of May Jeanne came for the last time into the Ornament Room, where Pierre Maurice read aloud to her a final ex-

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hortation: "My very dear friend, ponder well over all that has been said. We, the Lord Bishop of Beauvais, the Lord Vicar of the Inquisition, and other Doctors, so tender of our care of your salvation, have admonished you both publicly and privately, in honour and reverence for God and the law of Jesus Christ, to quiet our conscience and suppress a grievous scandal. Suffer not yourself to be separated from the Lord, choose not the way of damnation with the devils, enemies of God that daily set their wits to work for the troubling of mankind, assuming the likenesses of angels and saints, as may be proven by the lives of the Fathers. If such spirits have appeared to you, credit them not. When our Lord confided the governance of the Church to the blessed apostle Peter and his successors, he bade us reject any that might come in Christ's name, offering but their own word in support of their mission. You ought never to have believed those who, you affirm, came to you,

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and we too, we ought not to believe you, since our Lord expressly commanded the contrary. If a soldier placed under your king's dominion had suddenly risen and said, 'I will not obey the king ; I will not submit either to him or his officers,' surely you would have thought that this man should be condemned ? Yet what can you plead for yourself, resisting the officers of Christ ? " And the like foolish cant in plenty. Moreover, she was summoned to appear upon the morrow in the graveyard of Saint Ouen, there to abjure in sight of all good people, or, if she would not do so, there to burn.

The Maid of Orleans, the world knows very well, was burnt in the old market, which bears to this hour the name of the Vieux Marché, and it is a sad place enough ; but an even sadder, surely, is the angle of Saint Ouen's church, between the nave and the hither wall of the south transept, as you face the westering sun. The church was still in building, and the fair tower men call the

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“ Crown of Normandy ” not yet reared, when on the Thursday in Whitsun-week there was set a platform underneath the eaves ; and here in state, below a canopy, were Beauvais and eight Abbots, with above three score friars, and the Cardinal Bishop of Winchester, that was esteemed a mighty man in his day ; half a million sterling had he lent to the English Crown, and paid the besiegers of Orleans out of his private purse.

Near to these great ones was another platform ; no canopy against the sweltering heat, but a stake, and piles of firewood ready laid, and Jeanne Darc sat beside them, with Loiseleur for company. From end to end the graveyard of Saint Ouen was guarded close by English soldiery ; a boding sultriness hung in the air, and farther off it thundered, as though a race of giants played at ninepins in the hills.

Since Beauvais was Master of the Revels the thing must be done in due order, and accordingly Guillaume Erard rose up to preach

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a sermon. He had very little liking for the task, and privily told his friends that he would to God he were in Flanders ; nevertheless he did what was required of him. " In the name of the Lord, Amen," quoth he, and dubbed the Maid a homicidal viper, warning all present to beware of her heresies, which resembled a horrible contagion of leprosy in the mystical body of Christ's Church.

" Answer him boldly, this preacher," said the Voices, " for verily he is a false preacher." Yet there was another counsellor at hand, more's the pity. If she would but recant, urged Nicholas Loiseleur, and submit herself to Holy Church, she should be freed from irons, and hear mass, in a decent good prison, with women to tend her as was fit ; and what this might mean to her, none knows, since none knows rightly what she had endured from John Grey, captain, and his merry men all.

Jeanne looked about her doubtfully.

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Would it not prove a hideous dream, these myriad eyes, and the lean grim stake which stood erect and waiting? Her Voices had promised her deliverance, release with glorious victory; hark, was not that the thunder of artillery, or was it only the artillery of thunder? Where were her generals, La Hire and the Bastard and the pretty Duke? Where Jean de Metz, and Bertrand de Poulangy, her brothers-in-arms on the pleasant ride to Chinon? Where in God's name was the king whom she had crowned? Panic-stricken the manhood of France held aloof, and all the running waters of the world shall not suffice to wash out that dishonour.

"Sign! Sign!" hissed Loiseleur, "and save your soul." He thrust a paper into her hands, a little folded paper, bearing some half a dozen lines of writing, scarce longer than a Pater Noster, as the lookers-on bore witness. And this same devil's flyleaf Jeanne Darc signed. She had no penmanship, but made a mark, and for her name her hand

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was guided by the King of England's secretary. "Please God, you have done a good day's work," quoth Loiseleur.

Memorable it is that as she wrote she smiled, a fleeting eerie smile, perplexing to her enemies at the time, perplexing to her lovers ever since. There are folk who go and loiter among the pictures of the Louvre, and know not what to make of the smile of Monna Lisa, and there are folk who loiter in the Pitti, where the Madonna del Granduca smiles strangely to herself. But these are only painted mysteries when all is said and done, and the small secret smile which troubled Rouen remains the strangest of the three.

Now at this moment a tumult arose, with such a hurly-burly and bandying to and fro of cries and stones, that no man rightly understood his neighbour. For the Earls of Warwick and Stafford were impatient to be gone and raise the siege of Louvier, but dared not throw a lance or fire a shot until the

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Maid was dead, and when they and their soldiery beheld the signing, a new fear knocked suddenly upon their hearts ; the girl had obtained the mercy of the Church, she would escape the fire. Herein they did the Bishop wrong, for his schemes were neatly laid, all cut and dry like the faggots on the scaffold ; her abjuration should in no way profit her, only dishonour her in the sight of men, which end once gained—well, well, these slow-witted Englishmen would see that he was not the bungler they supposed. The wench should burn sure enough, and burn as a relapsed heretic, what is more ; but they must give him time.

Yet for the present, and to quiet the uproar, her sentence was read in haste : life-long imprisonment, with the bread of sorrow and the water of affliction, in order that she might bewail her faults here rather than hereafter. Then by command of Beauvais the arch promise-breaker, they took her back to the dungeon whence she came, and laid her

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again in irons, and John Grey and his merry men still guarded her day and night.

As for the full and formal recantation, which Pierre Cauchon flourished at the judges in his glee, it would run into some fifty lines of a closely printed book, and confessed all manner of sorceries, and promised all manner of amendment, only it bore no signature. Yet the cheat of the small folded paper served—Rouen had seen her fumbling with a pen, and that was proof enough.

Jeanne herself during the days which followed seemed like a scared bewildered child, uttering her protests to stone walls and stonier hearts. “My Voices tell me of the great pity it is, this treason I have committed, but what was in the writing I mistook ; I mistook the meaning of the word ‘abjure.’ That I signed, I signed through fear of the fire, damning my soul to save my life.” And again, “If the judges wish, I will take a woman’s dress ; for the rest, I can do no more.” And again, “I never

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purposed to deny my visions. Whether they were good spirits or whether they were evil, they really did appear to me." Truly Beauvais and his gang have accomplished their fiend's errand to the full, forasmuch as they have made her doubt her Saints.

Trinity Sunday passed, and on the Monday it was noised abroad that she had worn man's dress, and small blame to her, since the guards concealed her woman's smock and would not yield it up, though she pleaded with them until noon.

The joyful tidings of her relapse were straightway carried to the Bishop ; she was forsworn, she had taken again the accursed male habit, contrary to her oath of abjuration, an abjuration she had neither seen nor signed, but no matter. Beauvais, so it chanced, was hastening from the fortress when he met the Earl of Warwick on the threshold. " Be of good cheer," he said in English (he prided himself mightily talking an alien tongue), " Be of good cheer. It is finished."

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On Wednesday the 30th of May, in the year of grace 1431, there was wrought a deed with as little grace to season it as was ever heard tell of in any christened realm, for on that day, both Church and State together, they burnt Jeanne Darc alive. Oh market-place of Rouen on the Seine, when the windless summer night is dark about you, forget the shrilly chaffer of your booths, and call to mind the thing done in you long since, the which has made you memorable !

Before the morning red was up, or the larks had sung matins in the fields beyond the fortress, there came into the prison Maitre Pierre Maurice and Brother Martin Ladvenu, bearers of ill tidings, though to do them justice bearers sorely unwilling, and told her how by midday she should burn. Pierre Cauchon he too rose betimes, since to him it was a joyous morn, a morn long looked for. He had worked diligently close upon a year, and now his archbishopric lay in sight. But

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first he must needs admonish the condemned, and he was no weakling, heaven be praised, nor the sort that fears to see a woman cry.

The Maid shrank weeping into a corner as he entered. "Bishop," she said, "I die through you."

"Nay, have patience," he replied, "you die because you broke faith with us, and persisted in your former evil doings."

"This would not have happened," pursued the accusing voice, "if I had been among fit companions. I summon you to meet me before God." And at that he turned and went out quickly. It is a tryst which none will envy him.

Already the passing-bell tolled overhead, like the approach of death made audible, yet Jeanne when she was ware of it said only, "I appeal to God, the great judge," and besought the last Communion to her comfort. The Bishop gave permission, but he sent the holy bread most slovenly in a napkin, not besecming the memorial of the Lord's passion,

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for little he recked of an insult to the blessed rite, if by this means he could insult Jeanne also. Then Martin Ladvenu was angry, and bade bring stole and tapers, and they carried the consecrated Host into the cell, with chanting and lights and due reverence, as was fitting.

“ Ah, Maitre Pierre,” quoth she, “ where shall I be to-night ? ”

“ Have you not firm hope ? ” Pierre Maurice answered.

“ Yes, verily ; God willing, I shall be in Paradise.” The terrors of the abyss were beaten back, fear of death and fear of hell scattered like grizzly dreams ; she served a good master, she had said, and for the mortal weakness of one hour he did in no wise cast her out.

As it drew near the time appointed, her hair was cut away ; true, the judges professed to be scandalised when she wore it short of her own free will, but now they themselves took the shears in hand. Such is the logic

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of monks. At nine of the clock they brought her forth ; she that freed France bound fast with cords, she that did crown its king having a mock mitre set upon her hand, and these words written, “ Relapsed heretic. Apostate. Idolater.”

Now when the cart was lumbering slowly from the Place Bouvreuil to the Vieux Marché, a strange thing happened, and a sure proof it is how there is never a soul so vile but the grace of God may take it un-awares, sudden and beautiful as moonrise. For a man pushed past the soldiers, and caught hold of the tumbril’s edge : “ Forgive ! ” cried Nicholas Loiseleur, “ Forgive ! ”

He had tricked her, hounded her to death, and no thanks to him that the rack had not been added to the burning ; yet she forgave him. Her heart was a mercy-seat which none approached in vain, her wounded enemy upon the battle-field, or the miserable priest who betrayed her.

All through the mild May night the crowds

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had flocked to Rouen, flocked as to a fair, and now the curious thousands thronged the market, and peopled roof and balcony and casement. Again beneath a canopy of state sat Beauvais with his friars, and a scaffold reared itself to giddy heights, a gaunt, terrifying thing of wood and plaster, the openings deftly fashioned for the passing of air-currents to and fro ; while at the head of the stake a placard told the story of the condemned, and told it thus : “ Jeanne, self-styled the Maid, liar, mischief-maker, abuser of the people, diviner, superstitious, blasphemer of God, presumptuous, false to the faith of Christ, boaster, idolater, cruel, dissolute, an invoker of devils, apostate, schismatic, heretic.”

They set Jeanne on a platform close at hand, and Maitre Nicholas Midi fell to his preaching forthwith. Poor little maid, she had heard her fill of sermons, and to be named a corrupt branch of the True Vine moved her not at all. There was no hope of rescue now,



“‘FORGIVE!’ CRIED NICHOLAS LOISELEUR”

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nor haply any need, since she and her Brothers of Paradise were reconciled. Dream-like the sights and sounds about her ; the coats of mail that glinted in the sunshine, the cavalry horses champing the bit and stirring restlessly upon the cobble-stones.

But Warwick and Stafford with their attendant lords had not assembled to listen to a sermon, and presently their patience snapped asunder. "Priests!" cried one, "will you make us dine here?" This was enough for Pierre Cauchon, who would not on his soul offend the English. "Jeanne," said he, "we can no longer protect you. Go in peace." Whereat was pronounced the final condemnation which surrendered all heretics to the secular law, praying it to "deal gently with them, both in life and limb." (O Christ ! O Church of Christ !)

As for the secular judge, who was an Englishman, he appeared uneasy, like to Pontius Pilate shifting blame : "Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered

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thee unto me." Indeed, so much disquieted was he, that he forgot to utter the death sentence, saying only, "Take her away!" And the bailiffs took her.

Then first she broke silence. "Whatever I have done, good or evil, my king is no wise answerable." (And you, Charles of Valois, when a score of years were come and gone, and you rode in state through Rouen market, did you catch an echo of those words? Did the festive garlands change to smoke wreaths overhead, and quiver like beseeching spectral hands of the child whom you abandoned to the fire?) With a light step she trod the fatal ladder, lightly as she had trodden the scaling ladders of Les Tourelles and Jargeau; it is the enemy's last stronghold, Maid of Orleans—take it by assault. "Va, va, fille de Dé, je serai à ton aide."

The executioner and his henchman, scarlet figures of ill-omen, set torches to the faggots from below, and the fire burst upwards, breathing hot and horribly. Brother Martin

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Ladvenu had lingered by her side, yet now she bade him look to his own safety and begone. Then, knowing that soon she would pass those flaming gateways into silence, she flung her last, abiding testimony to generations unborn. "My Voices were of God," she cried; "they have never deceived me."

An English man-at-arms fastened two sprigs together cross-wise, and these she accepted thankfully; moreover, the great cross from the neighbouring church of Saint Sauveur was brought and reared in view: "For," said she, "keep it ever in my sight until the end." All Rouen strained to catch her dying words, and heard her call again and yet again upon the name of Jesus the Redeemer. Despite the drifting fumes and writhing flame, God send she saw her angels closing round her, divinely clear as when she saw them first in the little apple-garth at Domremy. The dense smoke drew a veil; why seek to lift it? In heaven was

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sung "Te Deum laudamus" for one released with glorious victory, and in Rouen people went home to their dinners.

Late that same night the executioner, having the looks of a demented man, came knocking at the gates of the Dominican priory, and told the brethren how he must visit shrine after shrine, praying God's pardon for the day's work. Wild stories flew about the streets; a dove had risen skyward from the piteous ashes; the Lord's Name flared emblazoned in the fire. "I would," quoth one, and he was of the number of her judges, "that my soul were such as I believe the soul of this maid to be." "We are lost," said another; "we have burnt a saint."

Jeanne Darc had never a grave at all, seeing men threw her ashes into the river, but when the Bishop of Beauvais came to die, he was laid in a carven tomb, as fine as you please. Yet though the Maid of Orleans has no grave, she does not want for an epitaph, and one may read it in the "Book of

ROUEN

Wisdom ” : We fools accounted her life madness, and her end to be without honour : how is she numbered among the children of God, and her lot is among the saints !

NOTES TO PART IV

Note 21, p. 92.—Such as :

“ Berthe au grand pied, Bietris, Allys
Harembourges, qui tint le Mayne,
Et Jehanne la bonne Lorraine
Qu’Anglais brulèrent à Rouen :
Où sont-ilz, Vierge souveraine ?
Mais où sont les neiges d’antan ? ”

Note 22, p. 99.—Father-in-law to Warwick the Kingmaker.

Note 23, p. 109.—Her famous and reiterated “ Passez outre.”

